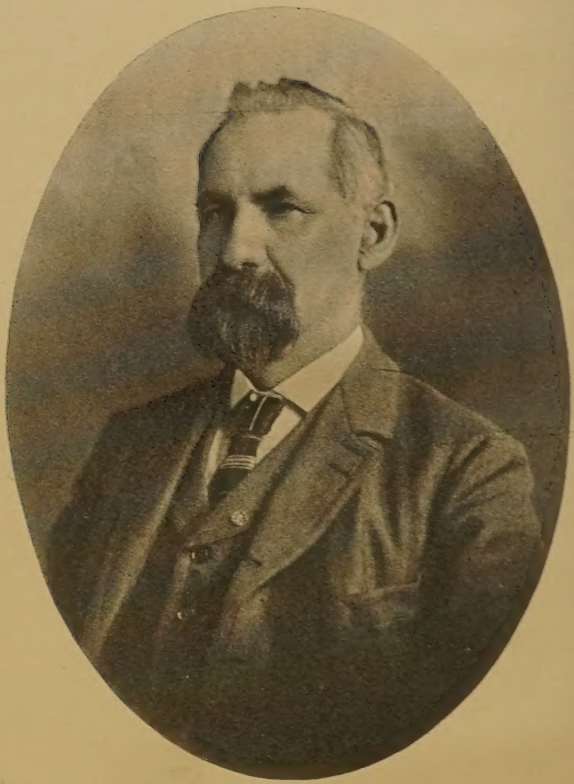
BALLADS

OF THE

FARM AND HOME

HENRY H. JOHNSON.



BALLADS of the FARM AND HOME

BY

HENRY H. JOHNSON

Author of "Ballads of the Hearthstone," Etc.

Just a singer of old songs,
Simple tunes that reach the place
Where the best of life belongs,
Where we look as face to face,
On the sacred things and sweet,
Of our lives and wonder how
We had half forgotten them—
All so well remembered now.

—*S. B. McManus.*

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ELKHART, INDIANA, U. S. A.

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Introduction

Without being seer or prophet, I predict that this little book will quietly win its way into the good will and hearts of very many, who would gently but firmly close the door upon a more pretentious volume. The majority of us have no crying use for a highly polished, ornate style of literature; we want our books as we want our friends—gentlemanly and honest, but not so fine that we are afraid of them and long with suppressed good breeding for them to go. This book has the air of companionship about it; the odor of sweet-brier roses and lilacs; a hint of the lane, of cattle and meadows and clearings—of some one calling for dinner on the back porch, and men-folks hurrying to the end of the win-row. The old folks will like to read it and "recollect" things; the younger ones will not say much, because it is what they are now living, but they will have their children learn the pieces by heart and speak them at school, and when children or any one "speaks" a man's pieces, his fame is made.

Elkhart, Indiana. S. B. McM.

FROM SHORE TO SHORE.

I HAD a vision just at eventide:
Before me swelled an ocean deep and wide,
And here and there upon its broad, blue breast,
Gay ships were seen, all moving, none at rest.
An angel form stood by me on the strand,
With shining features and with outstretched hand,
Pointing my gaze the dark-blue waters o'er,
And bade me watch the ships that left the shore.

He spake in tones that thrilled my very soul:
"Gaze forth, oh man, where yon blue waters roll!
Behold life's ocean spreading far and wide,
Behold the ships that skim its swelling tide.
Each craft you see is but a human life,
Launched forth to win or perish in the strife.
Mark well the course and destiny of each,
And profit by the truth their ends doth teach."

I saw a tiny boat shoot from the shore,
So frail it scarce could float the freight it bore,—
An infant, with its great and wondering eyes
Gazing around in childish, glad surprise.
Onward the fragile craft serenely sped;
The infant laughed in glee. No fear nor dread
It felt, but shouting loudly in its glee,
It rode the surface of the shining sea.

FROM SHORE TO SHORE.

I saw, a little farther from the shore,
A larger boat propelled by silver oar;
A group of happy children was its load,
And merrily they played as on they rode.
I heard them laughing loudly in their play,
As onward sped their boat upon its way;
I heard their voices shouting o'er the flood—
"O, life is grand! All things in life are good!"

A little farther out, with swelling sail
And streaming flag moved by the gentle gale,
A yacht sped on; brave youths and maidens fair,
Upon its decks were pacing here and there.
In beauty smiled the soft, blue skies above,
While arm in arm they walked and talked of love,
And gazed into the future glowing bright
With sunny days, but saw no dismal night.

Still farther out, with masts and sails and shrouds
Towering aloft toward the hovering clouds,
A goodly ship I saw; strong men were there,
With brows on which were marked faint lines of care,—
And matrons, in whose auburn tresses glow
The first precursors of the coming snow.
Some strove for wealth, and some for dazzling fame,
While others cared for neither gold nor name.

Far out and near the distant, shadowy strand,
I saw a ship approach the darkened land.

It bore the scars of many an angry gale,
On hull and mast and shroud and tattered sail.
Groups of the aged thronged its storm-worn deck,
They, like this vessel, scarcely more than wreck:
Old men and women, bent with age and toil,
Bearing with tottering limbs their mortal coil.

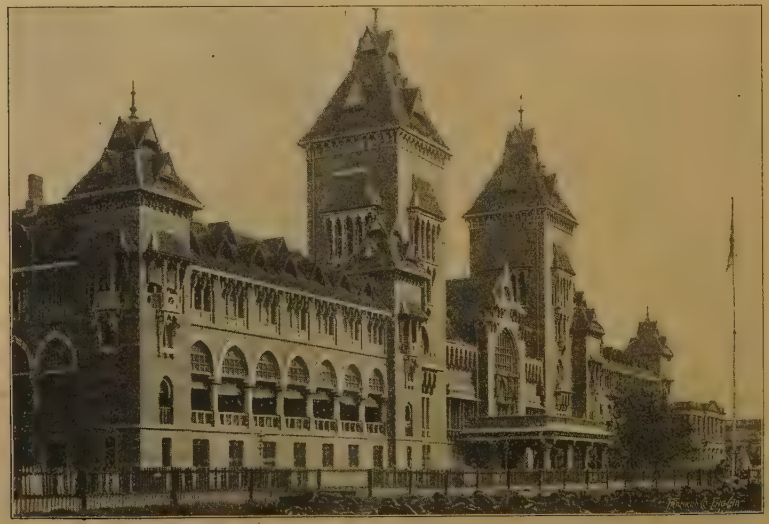
With snowy heads and shoulders stooping low,
They sat, or slowly tottered to and fro;
Seamed were their brows with many a line of care,—
Rough storms of life had left their traces there.
And some, their longing glances backward cast,
And sighed for joys and loves and labors past.
Others, with eager eyes, pierced the thick gloom,
And saw a life beyond the nearing tomb.

I strained my gaze the broad, deep ocean o'er,—
A deep, dark gulf composed the further shore.
"Tell me," I cried, "what 'tis that bounds the wave!"
The angel sighing answered: "'Tis the grave!
What thou hast seen is life's full-written page;
Mark well its course from infancy to age.
See how, from sunshine on to murky gloom
Its course proceeds,—its end the silent tomb."

"But see!" And pointing with his outstretched hand,—
I saw the outlines of a golden land:

FROM SHORE TO SHORE.

Close to the grave its borders seemed to lie,
And thence it stretched beyond the farthest sky.
"Behold the life beyond this earthly one!
When *this* is o'er then *that* will be begun.
To reach it, man must pass through all the gloom
That gives the chill and terror to the tomb;
But once transported to that happy shore,
Man's life will grow in bliss forevermore."



"Within the palace of the king." (Page 12.)

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

WITHIN the palace of the king,
A royal feast was spread;
The tables groaned with viands rare,
Belshazzar at its head.
Beside the king, on right and left,
With proud and haughty mein,
A thousand lords of Babylon,
His chosen guests, were seen.

Then flowed the wine, then rang the shouts,
Resounding through the hall;
What recked they that the foemen swarmed
Outside the city wall?
Let mirth and revelry and wine,
The night's long hours speed on;
No foemen's might can break the walls
Of grand old Babylon!

"Ho!" spake the king, "fill every cup
With joy-infusing wine,
And we will drink to Babylon's gods,
Thanksgiving for the vine!"
Then loudly rang the revelers' shouts,
Then flowed the liquid cheer;
Each heart beat high in maudlin mirth,
Nor felt one pang of fear.

But what is that which stills each tongue
And blanches every cheek,
And makes Belshazzar's haughty form,
Grow tremulous and weak?
His staring eyes in horror gaze!
His knees with terror shake!
What sight or sound can fright him thus—
His haughty spirit quake?

Behold upon the whitened wall,
A shadowy, phantom hand,
Tracing strange, wondrous, mystic words,
He cannot understand!
The cup, untasted, brimming stands,
Each voice is hushed in fear,
Until the frightened monarch speaks—
"Go bid the seers draw near!"

They come, Chaldea's wisest men,
Who strive, but all in vain,
The mystic writing to expound—
Its meaning to explain.
In vain his threats, in vain his bribes,
In vain his stern command;
Their skill cannot expound the words
Traced by the phantom hand.

"Ho! Bring the captive prophet forth,
The old Judean seer,
And let him speak those mystic words
And make their meaning clear!"

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

He came, the aged, gray-haired man,—
  He read the words of doom
That told Chaldea's course was run—
  That night would build her tomb.

While yet the prophet's solemn words
  Proclaimed Chaldea's fate,
The foe, with martial tramp and shout,
  Entered the palace gate.
With shriek and groan and clang of steel,
  The palace walls did ring,
And slain within his palace halls,
  Fell Babylon's proud king.

FORTY-FOUR TO-DAY.

HOW quickly time speeds on its flight,
How swiftly years roll on!
We scarcely hail the new year born,
Ere its brief course is run.
I look back o'er the past, and count
The years now passed away,
And find I am no longer young,
But forty-four to-day.

It seems but yesterday that I
Sat on my father's knee
And thought of the long years to come,
Ere I a man should be.
The years then seemed so long, I thought
They ne'er would pass away;
But they are gone, and here I am
Just forty-four to-day!

Ambitious hopes that fondly dwelt
Within my bosom then,—
Of honored station I would hold
Among my fellow men,—
Those hopes that filled my bosom once,
Like dreams have passed away,
And left the stern reality,
I'm forty-four to-day.

FORTY-FOUR TO-DAY.

The home where I in childhood played,
Is home no more for me:
'Mong those who now are gathered there,
No well-known form I see.
My playmates that in youthful days
I loved, Oh, where are they?
But few remain to say with me,
"I'm forty-four to-day."

I've something known of life's delights,
I've tasted of life's woe,—
I've seen the lowly rise to fame,
I've seen the high brought low;
I've seen youth's rosy beauty fade,
I've seen brown hair turn gray,
I've seen the whole forenoon of life,—
I'm forty-four to-day.

I look back o'er my life and ask,
What good deed have I done,
That men may bless my memory
When my life's course is run?
If I've done all to bless my kind,
That has lain in my way,
Then, not in vain I've lived to count
My forty-fourth birthday.

ONLY ONE KILLED

AS I scanned my morning paper,
Noting what its columns said,
One brief item caught my notice,
And its few short words I read.
'Twas an accident there mentioned,
Happened to a railroad train,—
Thus the morning paper told it:
"Only one poor brakeman slain."

Then I flung aside the paper,—
Strange, sad thoughts came in my head,
While alone I sat and pondered
Of that one poor brakeman dead!
Only one among the hundreds,—
He the only one to die:—
He was nothing but a brakeman,—
Hardly worth a tear or sigh.

Then my thoughts in sadness wandered
To the luckless brakeman's home
Where a wife and prattling baby
Wait in vain for him to come.
God have pity on the infant!
Heaven help the widowed wife!
Two poor hearts are crushed with anguish,
By the loss of that one life.

ONLY ONE KILLED.

Hearts are crushed and hopes are blighted,
  Joy from one bright home has fled;
Tears are flowing, sobs are welling,
  For that one poor brakeman, dead!
Though the world may feel no sorrow,
  Show no sign of grief or pain,
Some fond hearts are wrung with anguish,
  For that one poor brakeman slain.

Only one! 'Tis soon forgotten,—
  Scarce remembered through the day;
Other themes our thoughts engaging,
  Drive it from our minds away;
But our hearts would break with anguish,
  We would weep and sob and moan,
We would feel the bitterest sorrow
  If the dead one were *our own.*

THE OLD MAN TO HIS WIFE.

JUST fifty years ago, Peggy,
Just fifty years to-day;—
That time we'll ne'er forget, Peggy,
Our hearts were young and gay.
You put your hand in mine that day,—
I knew it trembled some,—
I knew you thought it hard to part
From friends and dear, old home.

I was just twenty-one, you know,
And you were just eighteen—
The fairest girl in all the town,
Or country too, I ween.
Your eyes were clear as diamonds bright,
Your teeth were like the pearls,
Your hair, a mass of golden light,
Fell round your head in curls.

No prouder man than I that day
When you and I were wed;—
I envied not the king, the crown
He wore upon his head.
I know the boys all envied me,
The girls all envied you;—
All things looked bright to us that day;—
Life showed its brightest hue.

THE OLD MAN TO HIS WIFE.

We both were poor in this world's goods,
  But rich in strength and health;
Our hearts were strong and resolute,
  And toil would bring us wealth.
No lazy hairs grew on our heads,—
  We scorned not honest work;
We had our fortune all to make,
  And did not dare to shirk.

Our farm was covered then with woods,—
  No house for miles around,—
Your father thought we both were fools
  As big as could be found,
When we set out to build our home
  And make our fortune here;
He said we'd both get sick and die,
  Without a neighbor near.

Our house was built of logs, you know,—
  The cracks were stopped with clay;
'Twas rough and rude, but 'twas our *home*
  For many a happy day.
I know the day I moved you there,
  You tried to wear a smile,
You praised the house and called it nice;—
  I watched you all the while—

And when at night we'd gone to bed,
  You thought I was asleep,
Then you gave out and broke right down,
  And I could hear you weep.

THE OLD MAN TO HIS WIFE.

I hadn't never thought before,
How much you'd have to bear
In leaving all your dear, old friends
Who'd lighten half your care.

And then I tried to cheer you up,
And begged you not to cry,
And told you that much better times
Would sure come by and by.
You dried your tears and bravely said
You'd do the best you could;
We'd both work hard and trust in God
That all would come out good.

The wolf's dread howl, the panther's scream,
We heard through many a night;
We had no fears; for we were safe,—
Our house was snug and tight.
The wild deer bounded lightly by
And looked into our door;—
He seemed to wonder at the sight
He'd never seen before.

From early morn till late at night,
We toiled through many a year;
We saw with pride, at each day's close,
The forest disappear.
And when at lengh our farm was cleared,
Rich crops of golden grain
Rewarded us for all our toil;—
It had not been in vain.

Our old log house began to look
  Too humble for us then;
Our girls were almost women grown,
  Our boys were almost men.
They wanted us to tear it down,
  And build one large and new;
The log house once was good enough,
  But now 'twould hardly do.

And so we tore the old house down,
  And built one large and new;
Of course it cost us quite a pile,
  But then *we* liked it too.
Our friends could come and see us then,—
  We'd lots of room to spare;—
No better house for miles around,
  Nor maybe anywhere.

But Peggy, there are memories,
  How tender they seem yet,
That cluster 'round that old, log house,
  I never can forget.
'Twas there our children all were born;—
  'Twas there our youngest died;—
'Twas there we've seen some happy times—
  Some sorrow, too, beside.

'Twas there that you were taken sick,—
  The doctor said you'd die;
For days and nights, beside your bed,
  I watched with sleepless eye;

And when at length the fever turned,
The doctor smiled and said
You'd live, I only know I dropped
Upon my knees and prayed.

Our children now have all grown up,
Have children of their own;
The world has not stood still and looked,
While we have older grown.
Your hair, once golden brown, Peggy,
Has faded white as snow;
The wrinkles in your dear, old face
Were not there once, I know.

My hair has grown gray, too, Peggy,
Care's wrinkles mark my brow;
My step, once firm in manhood's prime,
Has grown unsteady now.
We're walking down life's plane, Peggy,
Together hand in hand.
Death's stream is near;—we'll soon cross o'er
Into the better land.

Our hearts have not grown old, Peggy,
Our love is just as true
As when upon our wedding day
Life wore a roseate hue.
Our hearts *will ne'er* grow old, Peggy,
With *love* they overflow,
The same as on our wedding day
Just fifty years ago.

WE MUST LEAVE THE OLD HOME, MARY.

WE must leave the old home soon, Mary; God knows how it most breaks my heart
To think of the sad times before us when we've got to get ready to start;
But there's no use for us now a cryin' for what has been done in the past,
An' we ought to remember that pleasure, though sweet, is not always to last.

You know we worked hard and we stinted, an' made every cent do its best,
Till we bought this nice house an' moved in it an' thought we'd be able to rest.
Then we owned all this fine farm around us an' owed not a person a cent,
An' we thought we could spend all our lives here in happiness, rest an' content.

How happy we've been since we lived here, no language of ours can name;
Each day has been full of enjoyment; the weeks an' the years just the same;

WE MUST LEAVE THE OLD HOME, MARY.

Only once, when our sweet little baby took sick
with the fever an' died,
We thought that things couldn't look darker, an'
wished we were both by her side.

But the preacher, God bless him, stood by us an'
spoke words of comfort an' cheer,
An' told us our child was in heaven in the arms
of the Savior so dear,
An' there we should meet her in glory when our
labors on earth here were done,
An' live on forever an' ever in the presence of
God and His Son.

Sometimes I have thought we were selfish an'
proud of the riches we'd got,
An' not thankful enough to our Maker for blessin's
that fell to our lot;
But we tried to be grateful for mercies, an' tried
to do good with our store;
No needy or sick person ever went hungry away
from our door.

I thought, when I signed with Josiah, I was doin'
a neighborly deed;—
I thought that no risk I was runnin', but helpin'
a man in his need.
He wanted just five thousand dollars, an' asked for
the help of my name;—
So I signed on the note that he showed me.
Smarter men would have done just the same.

I thought that Josiah was honest; yes, on that I'd
a most risked my life;
But too late I found out to my sorrow he'd deeded
his farm to his wife.
When the note that I'd signed was protested,
Josiah kept out of the way,
So it falls onto me as endorser, an' there's nothin'
for me but to pay.

But it takes all we've gathered together,—our farm
an' our buildin's an' stock,
To pay up that note of five thousand; for Jones is
as hard as a rock,
An' says that he *must* have the money, when raise
it he knows I can not;
So there's no other way left me but to give him up
all we have got.

Our good, old home never seemed dearer than it
does now we know we must leave;
That strangers must own this dear homestead,
seems almost too hard to believe;
An', Mary, I can't keep from cryin' to think what
our future will be:—
When once we have left this dear homestead, God
knows when another we'll see.

If we were both forty years younger an' healthy
an' hearty as then,
We could start out once more with good courage,
an' build up our fortune again;

But now we are both over sixty;— you just that an' I sixty-one.
We're too old to work hard as we used to. Life's labors with us are 'most done.

For myself I don't think I would mind it so much, for I know *I'm* to blame;
But whatever of hardship *I'll* suffer, I know that *you'll* suffer the same.
I thought I was doin' a kindness, an' helpin' a neighbor along,
An' I never would dreamed that Josiah would done me so cruel a wrong.

But the homestead must go from us, Mary! God forgive the bad man for his deed!
We'll try to forgive while we suffer, an' trust God to supply every need;
But I can't hardly keep from complainin', when I think of the home we must leave,
An' that strangers will come in our places, only makes me the harder to grieve.

Every room in this house has its mem'ries of times that are gone in the past,
Each time I look out of the window I think it will soon be the last;
An' I can't help the tears that are startin', an' the sighs that come up from my heart
When I think that the time is soon comin' when this old house an' we are to part.

WE MUST LEAVE THE OLD HOME, MARY.

Yes, we'll leave in a few days now, Mary; I'll try
to bear up if I can.
I know that this cryin' an' snivelin' is hardly the
thing for a man;
But it seems 'most like tearin' my heart-strings to
bid the old homestead good-by,—
To leave the dear old house forever, where we've
both lived an' both hoped to die.

GRANDFATHER'S STORY.

COME right here, you little toddler. Crawl
right up on grandpa's knee,
An' I'll tell my boy a story of the times that used
to be
When your father was a youngster just about as
big as you,
Just about as fat an' healthy, an' as full of mischief
too.

Then this country wasn't settled;—neighbors
wasn't very near;
All was thick, dark woods around us, filled with
wolves an' bears an' deer;
We could hear the wolves a howlin' 'round about
us every night,
An' the panther's fearful screechin' didn't add to
our delight.

But we didn't fear the critters, for our house was
good an' stout,
Made of logs cut in the forest, strong enough to
keep 'em out;
So we all slept just as soundly as we do in this big
house,
An' we feared no wolf nor panther any more'n we
would a mouse.

An' we both were just as happy, (that is your
grandma an' me),
Jest as happy as two persons who have health an'
strength can be;
An' yer father was a youngster nigh on four or five
years old,
That we wouldn't sold nor traded for 'bout twice
his weight in gold.

'Twas one afternoon in summer, – I was choppin'
in the woods,
An' your grandma was a cleanin up our stock
o' household goods;
Ted (that's what we called yer father), was a
playin' 'round the house,
Cuttin' up his cunnin' capers as mischievous as a
mouse.

All at once your grandma missed him an' she went
a lookin' 'round;—
Hunted high an' low to find him, but no Teddy
could be found.
Then the awful thought came to her that her boy
had strayed away
An' got lost there in the forest, or become the
panther's prey.

Then she thought about the dinner-horn, an'
quickly grabbed the thing
An' blowed a blast upon it that made the old woods
ring.

I heerd it an' I wondered what on airth could be
to pay,
For I'd never heard that horn before at such a time
of day.

But I knowed that somethin' dreadful had come
over her or Ted,
An' I quickly stopped my choppin', while I fairly
shook with dread;—
Then I dropped my axe an' started just the best
that I could run,
An' I made the spryest steppin' on that day I'd
ever done.

When I reached the house, yer grandma sot there
pale as any ghost,
Wringin' of her hands an' cryin', "Ted is lost!
Poor Ted is lost!"
An' I couldn't find out nothin' only that the boy
was gone,
For yer grandma kept on cryin' in that way, an'
takin' on.

Then I tried my best to cheer her;—told her that
I'd find the child,
Though my heart was almost broken an' my head
was almost wild;
So I took my good, old rifle, said a prayer for
little Ted,—
Started out into the woods to find the boy alive or
dead.

All the afternoon I hunted, lookin' 'round each
bush an' tree,
But no sight nor trace of Teddy in the forest could
I see;
An' when darkness came around me so I couldn't
hunt no more,
I went back to cheer yer grandma, for her heart
was awful sore.

In the mornin' I was travelin' soon as daylight
ever shone,
An' yer grandma she went with me, for she
wouldn't stay alone.
On an' on we tramped an' hunted, lookin' close on
ev'ry side,
Peerin' sharp in clumps of bushes where a rabbit
couldn't hide.

By and by, almost discouraged, grandma cryin'
like a child,
An' my poor heart almost breakin' an' my brain
a goin' wild,—
All at once I sighted something made my heart
bound up in joy,—
There, asleep beside some bushes, lay our darlin'
little boy!

Fast asleep, his little fingers stained with berries
that he'd eat,—
Stains upon his dress an' apron, scratches on his
chubby feet;

But these things we didn't notice, for our hearts
were wild with joy,
When we seen right there before us, safe and
sound, our darlin' boy!

But the joy we both were feelin' quickly changed
to dreadful fear,
For there right above our Teddy, in a hemlock
standin' near,
Lay a monstrous, hungry panther, fixin' for a
savage leap
On our darlin' little Teddy lyin' quiet, fast asleep.

We could hear the panther growlin', see his eye-
balls glistenin' bright;
See his savage mouth wide open an' his teeth a
shinin' white,—
See his long tail, like a serpent, back and forward
slowly swing,
While he kept his claws a workin', fixin' for the
deadly spring!

For one second I felt dizzy, felt that I was goin'
wild
An' I prayed "Oh, God in heaven! Save, oh save
my darlin' child!"
Then I brought my good, old rifle to my shoulder
with a thump,
Pulled the trigger as the panther gathered up his
feet to jump!

Right behind the left fore-shoulder, through its heart my bullet sped,
An' with one fierce scream of anger, down the beast fell quiverin', dead!
Then how quickly to our bosoms we both clasped our darlin' boy,
While the tears ran down our faces, tears of thankfulness an' joy.

Now you toddler, grandma's callin', guess perhaps she's wantin' me;
Yes, my story is all ended; jump right down from off my knee,
An' I'll go an' see what's wantin', an' maybe some other time,
I will tell another story 'f I can make it work in rhyme.

ANSWERING PRAYER.

OLD Deacon Jones was a grave old man,
With a sanctimonious air,—
A firm believer in clinging faith,
And the efficacy of prayer.
Each morning and eve he humbly knelt
And loudly prayed for the poor,—
That all their needs might be satisfied,
And the wolf kept from their door.

He deemed himself a benevolent man,
For he gave from his ample store
A goodly sum for bibles and tracts
To be sent to some heathen shore;
But he thought the poor in his neighborhood
Had enough of his fostering care,
If he, each night on his bended knees,
Remembered them in prayer.

The Widow Smith was a worthy soul,
Who lived in a cot near by;
The plainest fare, and scanty at that,
Was the best she could supply;
And often at night when she bent her knee
By her humble bed to pray,
Her tears would flow at the bitter thought
She'd no food for the following day.

ANSWERING PRAYER.

She could look across to the Deacon's house
On many a winter's night,
And see, through the glistening window-panes,
The hearthstone gleaming bright;
And often a sigh would escape her lips
As she thought of the rich man's store,
And wondered why God had favored *him*,
And made *her* so miserably poor.

The Deacon had a mischievous son,
A boy by the name of Ned;
He'd but slight regard for his father's prayers,
Thought "Faith without works is dead;"
And oft would the Deacon sadly sigh
And wipe a tear from his face,
As he prophesied that his only son
Would the family name disgrace.

One night while the Deacon humbly knelt,
As often he'd done before,
Ned slyly rose from his bended knees,
And cautiously opened the door,
Then closed it again and betook himself
Down the outside cellar stair,
To see 'mong the good things stored away,
What his father had to spare.

He rolled a barrel of potatoes out,
Then next a delicious ham,
With a bushel of red-cheeked apples and
A jar of raspberry jam.

Adding a few heads of cabbage sound,
He loaded all into the cart
And yoked up the oxen before it when
All things were ready to start.

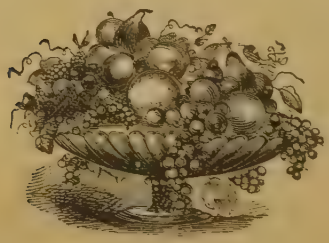
The Deacon continued most earnestly
To pray that the poor might be blest
With food and with raiment comfortable,
If the Father in heaven thought best.
He knew not that Ned, the young scapegrace,
Had silently passed through the door,
For never such act of irreverence,
His son had committed before.

The Deacon rose from his bended knees
And gazed at the vacant chair
Where lately he'd seen his son kneel down,
But no Ned was kneeling there;
Then he heard a voice in the gloom outside
Shouting "Haw there! Git up! Gee!"
And he spoke to his wife in startled tones,
"Sophronia, what *can* it be?"

They both rushed out and their arms flew up
In a gesture of surprise
At the sight they saw in the roadway there,
They could scarcely believe their eyes!
And they shouted, both, in a chorus loud,
"What the dogs are you doing, Ned?
Come back! Do you hear? Put those things away
And get yourself quickly in bed!"

No heed paid Ned to this stern command,
As on through the dark with his load,
Toward the widow's little brown cot,
With cheerful footsteps he strode;
But he shouted back these words to them,
That rang on the chill, night air:
"I am helping God just the best I can
To answer father's prayer."

The Deacon paused in thought, and scratched
The round, bald spot on his head;
Then turning to his meek-eyed wife,
"Sophronia," he said,
"I've learned a lesson from Ned to-night,
I think I'll not soon forget,—
That *praying* for the poor is pretty good,
But *giving* is better yet!"



RIDING DOWN HILL.

OH what brightly glowing pictures of our happy childhood days,
Memory paints with hand artistic and spreads out before our gaze!
Scenes of innocent enjoyment our enraptured visions fill
As we see ourselves as children riding down the snow-clad hill.

How distinctly we remember many a frosty winter night,
When the moon, all o'er the hillside, poured a flood of golden light,
And the crust-clad meadow glittered like a frosted silver sea,
Dotted here and there with shadows from some lonely, leafless tree.

How we clambered up the hillside o'er the slippery, congealed snow,
While the frosty night air painted on our cheeks a ruddy glow,
And our hearts with joy o'erflowing, knew no heavy weight of care,
For no thoughts of sad to-morrows did our happy moments share.

Then each boy his hand-sled mounted and made
ready for the start,
And behind him sat the maiden who was nearest to
his heart,
With her little hands, like vises, clinging closely
to his arm,
Trusting in his skill and courage to protect her
from all harm.

Down the glistening hill we glided like an arrow
swiftly sped,
And we looked on him with envy, who was riding
just ahead,
But our envy knew no hatred toward the lucky boy
who won,
For each one had his full measure of the grand,
exciting fun.

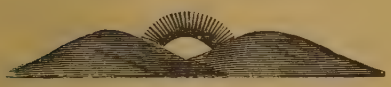
Then some mischief-loving urchin quickly turned
his sled about,
And a little scream of terror ended in a laughing
shout
As the riders quickly tumbled in the sudden over-
throw,—
Legs and arms in chaos sprawling as they rolled
upon the snow.

There were Jane and Sue and Mary and a host I
cannot name;—
How their coy, coquettish glances set our youth-
ful hearts aflame!

And our fancy fondly pictured happy scenes in later life
When each boy would call his sweetheart by the sacred name of wife.

But I've learned that disappointment blasts the fondest hopes of youth,
And our fancy's brightest pictures often hide the plainest truth;
Youthful hopes and youthful fancies and youth's dreams of future joys,
Leave us when gray hairs and wrinkles tell us we no more are boys.

Oh, those happy days have vanished never to return again,
And the boys I knew in childhood, now are grown to gray-haired men;
And the maidens, once our sweethearts, feel their hearts with pleasure glow
When they tell to their grandchildren of the days of long ago.



WHAT OLD PETE SAW IN THE BOTTOM OF THE GLASS.

IN a miserable hut near the end of the street,
Lived a wretched old man and they called him Old Pete.
Here Pete and his wife lived a miserable life,—
Pete was fond of his toddy and ill-used his wife.
His highest ambition in this world of sin,
Was to drink and get drunk and get sober again.
But Pete and wife were not always so bad,
Their condition not always so wretchedly sad.
Old Pete and his wife were both young long ago,
And happy as most of us are here below;
They had children to fondle—a girl and a boy,
And their hearts were o'erflowing with pleasure and joy.
But Pete liked his cider, and thought it no harm
To drink it at night when he came from the farm.
Then after awhile he conceived it no sin,
To taste stronger drinks such as brandy and gin,
Till his appetite strengthened and mastered him quite,
And he sat in the tavern almost every night,
While his wife and his children, alone in their home,
Waited late in the night for the father to come.

His farm was neglected, his fences fell down,
His creditors met him with ill-concealed frown;
His wife was discouraged, his children no more
Were petted by him as they had been before.
The old farm was sold, and the money all went
To pay up the landlord; for there it was spent.
Then they moved in the shanty we spoke of at first;
It was wretched enough, but that was not the worst.
The children, neglected, soon sickened and died,
And the wife, broken-hearted, soon lay by their side.
Good men shook their heads and said nothing could save
Old Pete; he would fill an unblessed drunkard's grave.

One night he reeled up to the bar of the inn
And called for a glass of his favorite gin.
He poured out the horn without stopping to think,
And quickly he raised the vile poison to drink;
But he suddenly stopped in a startled amaze!
Something there in the glass seemed to fasten his gaze!
Down, deep in the bottom he saw such a sight!
His knees bent and quivered in dreadful affright!
Way down in the bottom, a picture he saw
More lifelike than pencil of artist could draw!
He saw there his mother close clasping a child;—

That child was himself, pure, with sin undefiled.
He saw her kneel down and ask Heaven to guide
In the strait path of virtue, the child by her side.
The scene changed again: In a gaily decked room,
With hand clasping hand, stood a bride and a groom,
Himself was the groom, and the one by his side
Was the choice of young manhood, his once happy bride,
Again the scene changed: A girl and a boy
Clasped their arms 'round his neck, filled his heart full of joy,
While his wife and their mother stood proudly close by,
A smile on her lips and love's light in her eye.
The scene changed again: In a hut small and rude,
On a rickety table, two small coffins stood.
He gazed on the vision with agonized stare!
They held his two children whom rum had placed there!
Again the scene changed: And the wife of his youth,
An angel of love and an angel of truth,
Lay dying before him; her expiring breath
Breathing prayers for her husband, loved even till death.
Once more the scene changed: And he saw in the glass
What appeared to his vision a smoldering mass
Rising up from the bottom, then open it burst

And hell yawned before him—the home of the curst.
He could see from its depth tortured demons arise!
He could hear their shrill shrieks rise in vain to the skies!
He could see their wild writhings in eternal pain,
And hear their loud pleadings for mercy in vain!
He flung the glass from him and rushed from the door,
With a vow to his God there to enter no more!

Old Pete kept the vow which he uttered that night,
When a terrible vision arose to his sight.
He's a sober man now, and he does what he can
To reclaim and reform every rum-enslaved man.
Success crowns his labors wherever he goes,
And a rich harvest blesses the good seed he sows.

THE OLD MAN'S STORY.

DO you ask why I'm sitting so lonely,
On this stone by the side of the way?
Do you wonder why I am sad-hearted
When all nature around me seems gay?
Do you ask why these great tears of sorrow
Roll down from my age-sunken eyes?
Do you ask why my deep-swelling bosom
Breathes nothing but moaning and sighs?

I'm eighty years old now, or over,
I think, but I can't rightly say;
Though it seems, when I look back upon it,
To be hardly more than a day
Since the time when I stood up with Betsey,
An' the minister made her my wife;
Oh, that day was the best and the proudest
An' happiest day of my life!

I was poor then, and so too was Betsey;
But both of us hearty and strong,
And willing to work for each other,
And each help the other along.
I worked hard and laid up some money,
And Betsey was saving and kind;
And I think, if you'd go through the world, sir,
No happier couple you'd find.

Then after awhile, we had children,—
Three of them, John, William and James;
And I tell you our hearts beat with gladness,
When we looked on their sweet, childish games.
But Jimmy, he always was feeble,
And puny and weak for a child;
And I thought when he died, that poor Betsey,
And I too, with grief would go wild.

But the minister spoke words of comfort,
And told us that God willed it so,—
That Jimmy, the youngest and feeblest
And dearest, should be first to go.
Then we thought of our other two children,
And thanked God we still had them left,
While we thought of some parents we knew of,
Death had of their children bereft.

Then I worked hard and saved ev'ry penny,
And Betsey she worked and saved too;
She patched and she mended my garments,
And saved me from purchasing new.
When we married, we hadn't a dollar,
Nor a roof except heaven's broad dome;
But we saved ev'ry cent as we earned it,
Till we'd purchased and paid for a home.

Do you see that white house over yonder,
With the great maple trees standing by,
And that neatly-trimmed big apple orchard,
And the red-painted barn standing nigh?

There are two hundred acres around them,
The best land that ever was ploughed;
And when Betsey and I knew we owned it,
You'd better believe we were proud.

Yes, we owned that big farm over yonder,
And we owed not a penny on earth;
Our children were grown up and married,—
They had both lived with us since their birth.
We'd begun to grow old, I and Betsey,
And lame in our backs and our knees;
So I rented the farm to our children
So we old folks could live at our ease.

But the boys they both grew discontented,
And thought they were having it hard;
Though I found, when I looked in their stables,
Their labor had brought them reward.
They had carriages grand and fine horses,
Much better than ever I'd had,
And plenty of cash in their pockets,
Though the times, it was said, were quite bad.

Then they argued with me and their mother,
And their reasoning seemed good and fair;
They wanted to make it their pleasure,
To make our old age free from care.
They said they would care for us kindly,
And make our old age full of joys;
And then, in a moment of weakness,
I deeded my farm to my boys.

've often regretted that moment,
But I believed it was all for the best,
For I thought it would give me and Betsey,
In our old age, more quiet and rest.
But I found that I was mistaken
And we'd done the worst thing in our lives;
For my boys, though I think they meant honest
Were governed too much by their wives

Yes, hardly a month had passed over,
Before we regretted that day;
For our children began then to treat us
As if we were both in their way.
And Betsey she felt she was slighted,
And she bowed down her poor, old, gray head:—
Her poor, old heart broke in its sorrow,
And in less than a year she was dead.

They buried her up in the churchyard;—
Her coffin was made plain and cheap;
Though I thought that it might have been nicer,
'Twas not *that* which caused me to weep:—
'Twas the way that they treated their mother
Before the poor woman had died;
And I thought, from their looks and their actions,
They wished I was laid by her side.

Perhaps I was childish and fretful
As often old men are, they say;
But they'd scowl, and their children would sauce me
Whenever I came in their way.

I couldn't put up with such treatment,
And in very plain words told them so;
Then they flared up in terrible anger,
And cursed me and told me to go.

I picked up my cane and my bundle,
And sadly limped out of the door;
And then when they shut the door on me,
I cried as I'd ne'er cried before.
But I hope that their children won't treat them
As they treated Betsey and me;
But we can't tell when raising our children,
What trouble and grief we may see.

So you've heard my sad story, kind stranger,
And know why I'm bowed down with grief;
But I'm waiting for Heaven's good pleasure
To bring to me death and relief.
No home have I now but the poorhouse,—
No food but the coarsest of fare,—
While those I find there for companions,
Are Misery, Want and Despair.

Now give me a lift, will you, stranger?
And help me up onto my feet.
I'll always remember you kindly,
Though again perhaps never we'll meet.
And I hope that my children will prosper,
Although they have blasted our lives;
And I hope that God will, in His mercy,
Forgive my poor boys and their wives.

OLD 'BIJAH DAY.

OLD 'BIJAH DAY was a fine old man,
With a broad and smiling face;
His heart was filled full of charity
And affection for his race.
His wife and he lived a happy life
In a pleasant country town;
An Eden where all was peace and love,
Was their cottage small and brown.

Old 'Bijah Day was a jolly man,
And his laugh was loud and clear;
He loved a joke and it mattered not
Though the joke might cost him dear.
When trouble came he would meet it square
With a smile instead of frown;
For he always looked on the brightest side
And laughed his troubles down,

Old 'Bijah Day was a kind old man,
And he loved to help the poor;
No needy one would he turn away
Unaided from his door.
He loved to dry the widows' tears,
And to hush the orphans' cry;
No hungry ones would be left unfed
When Old 'Bijah Day was nigh.

OLD 'BIJAH DAY.

Old 'Bijah Day was a Christian man,
  Quite old-fashioned in his way;
The creed he taught by his word and acts,
  Was to work as well as pray.
His doctrine was of the broadest kind,
  In a few short words expressed:
'Twas this: "*In helping a needy one,*
  Man is serving God the best."

When 'Bijah died, though he left no wealth
  In glittering gold and lands,
His name, enrolled with earth's noblest ones,
  In brightest letters stands.
Around his bier came the worthy poor,
  And affection's tears they shed;
While from each heart rose the plaintive wail —
  "*Our best earthly friend is dead.*"

IT IS A LONG LANE THAT HAS NO TURN.

THOUGH clouds may mount up the horizon,
And shut out the sun's gladdening light,—
Though storms may be beating and howling,
And bright day seem turned into night;—
Though friends may present the cold shoulder,
And all our kind offices spurn,
These things can't continue forever;—
'Tis a long lane that has not a turn.

Misfortunes may strive to o'erwhelm you,
The world may maliciously frown,
The Fates may conspire against you
To crush you and fasten you down;—
But if you fail not in your courage,
And keep your way steady and stern,
You'll find there is truth in the adage—
"'Tis a long lane that has not a turn."

Though fortune seem bound to elude you,
And all your hard toil seem in vain,—
Though even your loftiest efforts
Seem nothing of good to attain,—
Keep striving, heroically striving,
Preferment and honor to earn,—
And while striving, don't fail to remember
'Tis a long lane that has not a turn.

IT IS A LONG LANE THAT HAS NO TURN.

When evil and wrong seem triumphant,
And right seems crushed down 'neath their sway,—
When deeds of dishonor and darkness,
Are done in the light of the day,—
Then battle the stronger for virtue;—
Its ashes will rise from the urn,
And right will once more be triumphant;—
'Tis a long lane that has not a turn.

When rulers wax proud and oppressive,
And subjects for liberty groan,—
When *might* is the law of the nation,
And Tyranny sits on the throne,—
Then up and to arms for your freedom!
Let Liberty's flames brightly burn,
And down with the haughty oppressor!
'Tis a long lane that has not a turn.

SHOW PITY.

PITY the fallen man,—
Judge not in wrath;
Drive him not further down
Sin's thorny path.
Though he be stained with crime,
Placed 'neath law's ban,
He is thy brother still—
Thy fellow-man.

Pity the fallen girl;
Flaunt not the shame
That with the darkest taint,
Blackens her name.
Drawn by the tempter's wiles,
Poor girl, she fell!
You might have fallen too,
No one can tell.

Pity the fallen one,
Woman or man;
Help the unfortunate
All that you can.
Christ to the erring one,
In days of yore,
Said "I condemn thee not:
Go, sin no more."

SHOW PITY.

Lift up the fallen ones,—
  Wash off the stains,—
Soothe with sweet, kindly words,
  The heart's great pains.
Hold up the feeble ones,
  Their footsteps guard;
God will thy charity
  Amply reward.

THE OLD-TIME SPELLING-SCHOOL.

'TIS the early evening hour, and the moonlight shining 'round,
Flashes from the bright frost crystals on the snow-enshrouded ground—
Casting shadows weird and ghost-like where the bare and leaf-stripped trees
Wave, with moaning sound, their branches in the chilly winter breeze.

But the picture is enlivened by the troops of girls and boys,
Hurrying 'long the snowy road with laugh and joke and song and noise;—
Toward the time-worn district schoolhouse speed their footsteps quick and light,
And their hearts with joy are bounding for 'tis spelling-school to-night.

Soon the old schoolroom is crowded,—every seat is occupied,
And about the stove is standing quite a group of youths beside.
All are chatting, joking, laughing, making almost bedlam din,
Till the teacher's ferule raps the time for spelling to begin.

Then two persons are selected by the crowd assembled there,
To be leaders in the contest in which all may have a share;
Then the leaders take position and the choosing is begun,--
All are drawn on, from the oldest even to the youngest one.

Husbands, wives and sons and daughters 'gainst each other are arrayed
In the intellectual conflict where their powers will be displayed.
What a motley host they number,—tender youth and hoary age,
From the district ignoramus even to the village sage.

Then, with book in hand, the teacher names some simple, easy words,
Such as bear and wolf and lion, mastiff, eagle, beasts and birds.
These, of course, are spelled correctly; not a single one is missed
Till he turns the well-worn pages and selects a harder list.

Then the hearts begin to tremble; fear is pictured on each face,
For the first to miss in spelling will be branded with disgrace,

And to add to his confusion, his discomfiture to crown,
He must vacate his position and ingloriously sit down.

One by one they fall like soldiers when the battle rages hot,—
Now a whole platoon is vanquished when the teacher mentions "*yacht*;"
Then a slaughter such as seldom on the battlefield is seen,
Happens when they stake their valor 'gainst the awkward word "*demesne.*"

But the strife can't last forever. Soon the last one takes his seat,
And the victory for the teacher o'er the spellers is complete;
And with ardor unabated, girls and women, boys and men
All declare some other evening they will try it o'er again.

Then each bashful youth approaches where his blushing sweetheart stands,
Drawing on her woolen mittens o'er her chubby, dimpled hands,
And he crooks his elbow to her, speaks in accents low and light,
"May I have the pleasure, Mary, to escort you home to-night?"

THE SCHOOLMA'AM'S CONFESSION.

'TIS not all true what people say
About our *grand profession:*
I'm going to give it all away;—
Just list to my confession.
Our life is not a life of ease,
Unmarked by care and trouble;
We have the district all to please,—
Which makes our labors double.

If there were one in all this world,
Whom I supremely hated,
On whom my vengeance would be hurled,
Until it should be sated,—
I'd ask no deeper sting of woe
With which my hate could reach her,
Than make her take some school I know,
And *always* be its teacher.

I've been a schoolma'am many years,
An honest living earning;
I've kissed the mothers' dirty dears,
Without a sign of spurning.
I've praised each doting father's child,
As finest in the nation,
And held it on my lap and smiled,
And lied like all creation.

"I've been a schoolma'am many years."

THE SCHOOLMA'AM'S CONFESSION.

I've "boarded 'round" from place to place,
  In storms and pleasant weather,
And slept with Jane and Nell and Grace,
  All in one bed together.
I've dined at tables covered o'er
  With dainties of the nicest,
And tables also, where the store
  Was far from being choicest.

I've slapped the hands and boxed the ears
  Of disobedient scholars;
I've caught the sly, mischievous dears,
  And shook them by their collars;
I've felt the censures and the hates
  Of fathers and of mothers,
But always found strong advocates
  Among the older brothers.

I've tried to help whate'er I could,
  The rising generation,
And hope I've done some little good
  For small remuneration.
My hair will soon be growing gray,
  And single still I tarry;
If some Professor'd come this way
  And ask me, I would marry.

IF THINGS WERE AS WE'D LIKE THEM.

IF all things in this world of ours
Were just as we'd like them to be,
The weeds would be all changed to flowers,
And sunshine forever we'd see.

No eye would be dimmed with a tear,
No heart would be heavy with grief,
No sighing nor groaning we'd hear,
The poor would not beg for relief.

The haughty would never look down
In scorn on the lowly and weak;
The smile would replace the dark frown,
And shame would ne'er redden the cheek.

Then friend would be faithful to friend,
Misfortune would never be known,
And honors true worth would attend,—
The cottage be peer to the throne.

Then suffering, sorrow and pain
And evil would never have birth;
This life would be free from all stain,
And heaven be here upon earth.

A SCHOOL REMINISCENCE.

'TWAS a cloudy day in autumn,
And the raindrops' pattering sound,
With the low wind's solemn moaning,
Added to the gloom around.
I was sitting in my schoolroom
All alone, for school was o'er,
And my head was aching badly,
And my heart felt sad and sore.

Something seemed to be the matter,—
Everything seemed going wrong;
Naught but trouble and vexation
Had I known the whole day long
Pupils seemed to be rebellious,
Seemed inclined to disobey;
Hence I, tired and disheartened,
Closed the labors of the day.

While I sat in sorrow brooding,
And with aching heart and head,
Suddenly I heard the accents
Of a childish voice that said:
"Teacher, tell Grace what's the matter;
Tell her why you feel so sad;—
Is it 'cause we've been so naughty?
Is it cause we've acted bad?"

Then I turned and saw beside me
Little Gracie's childish form,
And upon my cheek she planted
Childhood's kiss so sweet and warm.
Then the little one continued,—
"Teacher, we feel awful bad;
All the scholars feel so sorry
'Cause we've made you look so sad;

"And they've sent me in to tell you
That we won't do so no more,
But we'll try to be good always,
As we used to be before."
Then she twined her small arms tender,
'Round my neck with close embrace,
And I saw the bright tears sparkle
On her sweet and lovely face.

Close I pressed her to my bosom,
Kissed her darling, upturned face,
And a blessing softly whispered
On the little angel Grace.
Then the clouds of sorrow scattered;—
All seemed sunshine overhead,
And the pain that had oppressed me,
Vanquished from my heart and head.

OLD FRIENDS.

NO friends are like the dear, old friends—
The old friends tried and true,
Who stood by us in bygone years,
When friends were only few:—
Whose cheering words and kindly hands,
Our burdens helped to bear;—
Whose hearts in sympathy were stirred,
Our joys and griefs to share.

No friends are like the dear old friends;—
God's blessings on them rest!
Though later friends may share our hearts,
We love the *old* friends best.
They stood by us when skies were clear,—
They stood by us in storm;
Time lessens not *our* love for them,
And *theirs* remains as warm.

No friends are like the dear, old friends;
New ones may prove as kind,
But *truer* ones than those of old,
We know we'll *never* find.
We'll not forget the dear, old friends,
While God shall give us breath;
They stood by us through weal and woe,
We'll stand by them till death.

"I TOLD YOU SO."

THE poet Whittier has said,
(Those woe-fraught words I've often read),
"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are '*It might have been*!'"

But I know words—words no less sad,
Words which would make an angel mad,
Or a saint's eyes with anger glow:
These are the words.—"*I told you so*!"

We have some self-styled prophets now,
(At least prescience they avow),
Who prophesy with solemn face,
After the event has taken place.

Unlike the seers of olden time,
We read of in the book sublime,
Coming events they fail to show,
But say, when past, "*I told you so*!"

When one is doing all he can
To make success of some pet plan,
And only meets with overthrow,
These seers will say, "*I told you so!*"

"I TOLD YOU SO."

No matter what you undertake,
If you a grand success do make,
These seers will disappointment show,
And sneer, "*It only happened so!*"

Let woman fall from her high place,
This same foul fiend, with doleful face,
Will shake his head in mocking woe,
And sighing say, "*I told you so!*"

Let scandal smirch the fairest name,
And crown the innocent with shame,
Those seers will shout with eyes aglow,
"*I knew 'twould be! I told you so!*"

Though never the first warning word
Of prophecy from them we heard,
When failure comes in overflow,
They still insist, "*I told you so!*"

Failure is hard enough to bear
Even when friends our sorrows share;
But harder still misfortune's blow
Falls when they say, "*I told you so!*"

Oh, would some dire misfortune fall
On the whole horde, and crush them all
Down in the depths of fell despair,
And ever keep them prisoned there,

This world would never shed a tear,
Nor bow in grief above their bier;

But joy in the grand overthrow
Of all who whine, "*I told you so!*"

Methinks when life to them is spent,
And they to fearful doom are sent,
We'll hear them howl in deepest woe,
"*I told you so! I told you so!*"

OSCULATION.

"I SAW a word the other day,"
I heard Kate to her lover say,
"And what it means I do not know,
If you can tell me, please do so:—
'Twas Osculation."

Ned turned to her in mute surprise,
A twinkle gleaming in his eyes;
Then said, "I'll try, my dearest Kate,
The meaning to communicate
Of Osculation."

"Just place your lips as I place mine,—
Yourself into my arms resign,
And let our lips meet in a kiss—
One long, sweet, lingering smack of bliss,—
That's Osculation."

She yielded with a queenly grace,
And then for full a minute's space,
He held her to his manly breast
While both their lips were closely pressed
In Osculation.

And then the blushing maiden said,
"I'm so forgetful you know, Ned,
I'll have to ask you to repeat
The meaning, every time we meet,
Of Osculation."

THE SOCIETY QUEEN.

IN costliest garments arrayed,
From crown to the tip of her shoe,
Each part of apparel displayed,
Is of the most fashionable hue.
Her dress I won't try to describe,
For my powers descriptive would fail;
And I'll venture on no diatribe
On the length of her train or her trail.

Her hair is the envy of all,
So wondrously long and profuse,
'Twould cover her form like a shawl,
If put to that excellent use:—
Her hair? It is *her* hair, of course,
Though not all grown from her own head;
She paid for it from her own purse,
(That's what is maliciously said).

Her eyes are as black as the night,
They shine with effulgence their own;
No ray from the soul sheds its light,
For of soul the proud creature has none.
Her cheeks blush with powder and paint,
Her lips wear the *en regle* smile,
Her teeth without blemish or taint
Are of the most exquisite style.

THE SOCIETY QUEEN.

Her bosom voluptuously swells
With cotton and whalebone and stays;—
Its symmetry vastly excels
All art which the sculptor displays.
The distance about her small waist,
Is the length of a gentleman's arm;—
(If the arm of a true man were there placed,
It would add very much to the charm)!

Her hands alabaster would shame,
So delicate, white and so trim;
Her lily-white fingers the same,
Are artistically tapered and slim.
Her fingers with jewels are graced—
A diamond, a ruby, a pearl
On the slender fingers are placed
To set a fop's brain in a whirl.

Her feet—but my pen here must stay;—
Enough, they are what they should be;
Of them I but little can say,
For little of them I can see.
She is courted by all in the land,
And wants but one requisite part;—
She is beautiful, graceful and grand,
But lacks that essential—a *heart.*

"She can teach the little children
To be firm and brave and true."

WOMAN'S MISSION.

THOUGH she may not in the battle
Bravely lead men to the fight,
Though she may not wield the saber
For the right against the might;
She can hover near the bedside
Where the wounded soldier lies;
She can cheer his dying moments,
Point him to the better skies.

Though she may not guide the voyage
Of the staunch old ship of state,
Steer it from the rocks and breakers,
Where its foes in ambush wait;
She may wield a greater influence
Over those who rule the land;
She may be the silent power
That shall nerve the statesman's hand.

Though she may not in the councils
Of the nation raise her voice;
Though she may not by their ballots,
Be proclaimed the people's choice;—
She can teach the little children
To be firm and brave and true,—
True to manhood, God and country;—
More than this no *man* can do.

WOMAN'S MISSION.

Though she may not from the pulpit,
  Speak the words of truth and love,
Warning men of death and judgment,
  Pointing them to God above;
She can speak to some poor sinner,
  Tell him Christ for him was given,—
She may,—by some word well spoken,
  Win a soul for God and heaven.

In the battle, in the pulpit,
  In the councils of the land,
On Fame's high and dizzy summit,
  Woman's form may never stand;
But more holy is her mission,—
  Noblest work that God has given,—
Hers to lift with hands so tender,
  Our poor world up nearer heaven.

GRANDFATHER'S CHRISTMAS STORY.

COME to me, my little grandchild, climb right up on my old knee,
An' I'll tell my boy a story of the times that used to be,
When your gran'ther was a toddler just about as big as you,
An' as full of fun and mischief, an' about as cunnin' too.

S'pose you're thinkin' of the stockin's you'll be hangin' up to-night,
An' what Santa Claus will put there 'twixt this time an' mornin' light.
'Twas the same with your old gran'ther; when the Christmas morn came 'round,
How I'd s'arch my little stockin's, glad for anything I found.

Santa Claus was very sparin' of the things he giv' to me,
For my mother was a widow an' as poor as poor could be.
Santa seemed to think that poor folks didn't want no Christmas feast,
So his choicest gifts he lavished where they needed 'em the least.

GRANDFATHER'S CHRISTMAS STORY.

I remember one cold Christmas Eve nigh eighty
years ago;
How the bleak winds howled an' whistled an' piled
up the drifts of snow,
An' the frost came creepin', creepin' through the
windows an' the door,
An' the cold came workin' upward through the
cracks in the old floor.

We were sittin', me an' mother, close beside the
old fireplace,
An' the firelight showed the tear-drops shinin'
there upon her face;
An' she put her arm around me, hugged me closely
to her side
While she told me of her trouble an' the reason
why she cried.

'Twas a dreary time for poor folks, for the season'd
been so dry
That the prices of provisions had run up so awful
high;
So we had to stay our stomachs with the plainest
kind of fare,—
There was lots of others like us, hadn't anything
to spare.

We had used up all our flour and the last, poor
slice of meat,
An' starvation seemed the next thing, for we'd
nothing more to eat;

An' our wood-pile too had vanished; the last stick
was burnin' low,
'Twas just fallin' into embers with a flickerin',
sickly glow.

I was but a little toddler, but I felt my mother's
grief,
An' was angry that the rich folks didn't bring us
some relief;
An' I recollect a sayin' that I believed God wasn't
good,
Or He'd send some meat an' flour, or at least a
load of wood.

Then I thought perhaps old Santa Claus might
then be on his way,
For he'd lots of work before him, an' 'twould soon
be Christmas Day;
An' I thought he'd be so busy that perhaps he'd go
right by,
For our cabin was so little it might fail to catch
his eye.

Then I whispered to my mother that we'd both get
on our knees,
An' we'd pray to God above us, an' we'd ask Him
if He'd please
Send old Santa Claus with flour an' a little bit o'
meat,
For we both were very hungry, an' had nothin'
here to eat.

Then we both knelt down together, right beside
my mother's chair,
An' my mother's voice it trembled while she said
an earnest prayer,—
Prayed to God if 'twas His pleasure, He would
send us food to eat,
While I knelt by her an' listened for the sound of
Santa's feet.

Soon I heard the sleigh-bells jinglin' an' in jest a
minute more,
Up there came a great, big sleigh-load an' stopped
just outside the door,
An' a lot of our good neighbors with their faces
beamin' bright,
Came a rushin' in an' sayin' they had come to
spend the night.

Each one had a pail or basket filled chuck full of
somethin' good,
An' besides, a great, big sleigh-load of the nicest,
dryest wood.
These, they said, were meant for mother, but they
brought some things for me,—
Candies, cakes an' toys an' apples, nicest things a
boy could see.

Santa Claus, they said, had sent them,—couldn't
come, himself, that way,
For he'd lots of homes to visit an' git 'round
before 'twas day.

Then I knew that God had told old Santa Claus
to send them there;
He had heard my mother's prayin', sent an answer
to her prayer.

Then they set their pails an' baskets in a row upon
the floor:—
Such a lot of nice provisions we had never owned
before.
There was meat an' flour an' 'taters, an' a nice, fat
turkey too,
'Nough to last me an' my mother all the long, cold
winter through.

But I wondered why my mother sat an' cried 'most
all the night,
When *I* couldn't keep from laughin' for my heart
it felt so light;
So I asked her in a whisper, an' she answered me,
"My boy,
'Tis not grief that brings these tear-drops; I am
cryin' now for joy."

But you're sleepy, little toddler, an' 'tis time you
are in bed
An' a dreamin' of to-morrow—bless your little,
curly head!
An' I rather guess that Santa Claus will not forget
to come,
For he's partial to the children when grandfather
helps him some.

A RETROSPECT.

IN my easy chair I'm sitting on this stormy, winter night,
Heeding not the wind's wild howling nor the snow-drifts cold and white;
For within my home the firelight gleams with warm and cheerful glow,
As my memory fondly pictures happy scenes of long ago.

How I love to fondly linger, gazing on the picture fair,
Noting well-remembered faces that I see depicted there,—
Scenes of childhood, long-forgotten, out from memory's storehouse rise,
Like a panoramic vision pass before my mental eyes.

Now I see the village schoolhouse with its dingy walls and floor,
And the children's forms there seated, slowly conning lessons o'er;
And I see the teacher stalking 'long the aisles, with frowning look,
Watching that no careless urchin raise his eyes up from his book.

A RETROSPECT.

While I closely scan the picture memory plainly paints for me,—
How my heart with feeling pulsates at the faces there I see,—
Faces ne'er to be forgotten, names I do remember well,
Scenes of sunny, happy childhood, long will they in memory dwell.

Now I hear the master speaking, "Boys and girls may have recess,"
And with hurrying feet, the children through the door with ardor press
Out upon the ample playground—mingled mass of girls and boys—
Shouting, running, playing, laughing,—there is music in the noise.

At the door the teacher loiters, smiling on their happy play,—
Dreaming dreams of bonny childhood when he was young as they;
Yet he notes the fleeting minutes when their play-time will be o'er,
And the jingling bell shall call them back to books and slates once more.

But a tear-drop dims my vision, and I sadly bow my head,
For there comes another vision, and I see some loved ones dead;

A RETROSPECT.

And I see the village churchyard with each little, grass-decked mound,
Where repose the silent sleepers waiting for the last trump's sound.

Ah, those days are gone forever. Now my face shows lines of care,
And I know that threads of silver mingle thickly in my hair;
But my heart is young as ever, and I feel its throbbing wild
As I, in the fancy picture, see myself again a child.

MATRIMONY.

LONG ages ago when this old earth was new
And life in the world was created,—
When of animate things which the vision could view,
Man, alone of them all, was not mated;
Then Adam complained that his heart felt so sore,
(Who wouldn't complain that is human),
That life at its best would be naught but a bore,
Unblest by the love of a woman.

The Creator was kind, and He thought of a plan
To ease Adam's heart of its sorrow;
So He put him asleep, took a rib of the man,
And woman was formed ere the morrow.
Then He brought her to Adam that he might perceive
The goodliest thing yet created,
When Adam in rapture pronounced her his Eve,
And rejoiced that at length he was mated.

Then Cupid went forth with his quiver and bow,
'Mong the people of every nation;
Neither wealthy nor poor, neither lofty nor low
Were missed in his grand visitation.
Then close on the heels of young Cupid, there came
Hymen, bearing his flower-decked halter,

MATRIMONY.

The victims of Cupid's sharp arrows to claim,
And lead stricken ones to the altar.

The fashion that thus in the garden begun,
For opposite sexes to marry,
Has spread far and wide, till each land 'neath the sun
The custom continues to carry.
The high and the low, the great and the small
Are leading their mates to the altar,
Unmindful what joys or what woes may befall
Those who place 'round their necks, Hymen's halter.

Some misguided ones only learn when too late,
They never were formed for each other,
And spend all their lifetime bemoaning their fate,
Since they learned each was meant for another.
Some marry in haste by the wish of their friends,
Some marry for wealth or position;
All such learn the fact when too late for amends,
Life, for them, has but woe and contrition.

'Tis said that when God in His infinite love,
Created the spirits of mortals,
He mated them all up in heaven above,
Then sent them to earth from its portals.
Then how happy is he who so blest is by fate
To meet with a spirit congenial,
And make no mistake in selecting his mate
To lead to the altar Hymenial.

HOP-PICKING TIME.

"HOP-PICKING is coming!" the boys shout in glee,
"What glorious times we are going to see!
We'll meet all the girls we have met years before,
And have all those jolly times over once more!"

"Hop-picking is coming!" the girls smiling say;
"We've been looking ahead for this many a day,
To the beaux we will have, and the dancing and fun,—
We'll enjoy them so well when hop-picking's begun."

"Hop-picking is coming!" the poor widow sighs,
As she looks on her child with love-light in her eyes,
And thinks of the comforts her earnings will buy
For herself and her child when the winter winds sigh.

"Hop-picking is coming! We'll earn what we can,
My wife and myself," says the stout working-man;—
"'Tis our harvest time now, but the winter will come
When we'll need all our earnings to gladden our home."

HOP-PICKING TIME.

"Hop-picking is coming! Next week I'll begin,"
The hop-grower says as he strokes his rough chin,
And his heart is as blithe as the bird on the wing
As he thinks of the money his hop crop will bring.

"Hop-picking is over! The girls are all gone,
And everything here seems so quiet and lone;
I don't know that ever I've seen so much joy,
But it's all vanished now," says the love-smitten
boy.

"Hop-picking is over! Good-bye, girls and boys,
We've made the folks crazy almost, with our noise,
For hop-picking seemed like a gay, giddy whirl,
But we'll quiet down now," says the light-hearted
girl.

"Hop-picking is over!" the poor widow sighs
As sadly she brushes a tear from her eyes;—
"The sum I have earned, though I wish it were
more,
Will keep, through the winter, the wolf from my
door.

"Hop-picking is over! We've earned quite a sum
And are ready for winter whene'er it shall come;—
We can buy food and clothing to last a long
while,"
The workingman says, and his face wears a smile.

"Hop-picking is over! Thank God, it is done!
I've wished myself dead ever since it begun.

They have tumbled my house from the cellar to dome
Till it looks more like bedlam than it does like a home."

Thus the hop grower groans when the pfckers depart,
While the frown on his face reaches down to his heart,
And he thanks all his stars, yes, each separate sphere,
That hop-picking comes only once in a year.

THE COUNTRY EDITOR.

WITHIN his dingy sanctum sat
The editor-in-chief;
His coat was seedy, and his hat
Had long since come to grief.
He leaned his head upon his hand,—
A frown crept o'er his face;—
His features, sometime fair and bland,
Now showed grim sorrow's trace.

Upon his sanctum table lay,
Spread out before his view,
A list of those who'd failed to pay
Subscriptions overdue.
The frown grew dark and darker still,
As o'er the list he pored,
And wondered how he'd pay the bill
He owed for last month's board.

He closed his eyes;—a vision bright,
Unto him did appear:
An angel, clothed in robes of light,
With stately step drew near
And spoke to him: "O, mourning one,
Expect a brighter day;
Thy sorrows may be almost done,
Subscribers soon will pay."

THE COUNTRY EDITOR.

He woke. A sound outside he heard,
Of footsteps drawing near;—
Emotions grand his whole soul stirred,
And filled his heart with cheer.
Through his whole being quickly passed
A proud, ecstatic thrill,—
'Twas some subscriber come at last
To pay that little bill.

The door swung open,—in there came
A most unwelcome guest:—
A man whose gaunt, ungainly frame
In shabby robes was dressed.
A poem, "Welcome, Balmy Spring,"
He held within his hand
And offered to the sanctum king
With an obeisance grand.

The editor, with frantic yell,
A shotgun grasped and fired;
The hapless poet gasping fell
And instantly expired.
Before the court austere and dread,
The editor was tried;—
The verdict of the jury read
"*Justifiable homicide!*"

THE OLD-TIME STAGECOACH.

SEATED in the tavern,
Anxiously we wait,—
Landlord comes and tells us
That the stage is late.
"Don't know what's the matter;—
Hardly ever so."
Rather chilly comfort
When we want to go.

But at length a rumble
Sounds upon our ear;—
Landlord comes and tells us
That the stage is here.
Hastily we clamber
In and find a seat;—
Tired, haggard-looking
Faces there we meet.

Then with jar and rumble,
Onward 'long the road,
Rolls the cumbrous stagecoach
With its human load.
Close the windows tightly!
How the foul dust flies!
Clogging throats and nostrils,
Smarting in our eyes.

THE OLD-TIME STAGECOACH.

Hear the driver singing
With a nasal twang,—
Hear him cheer his leaders
With a sharp "G'lang!"
See him shake the ribbons,—
Hear his whip-lash crack,—
Horses springing quickly,
Almost break our back.

Toiling up the hillsides,
Speeding down the grades,
Through the beaming sunshine
And the forest shades,—
Rumbling over bridges,
Far above the tide,—
Gliding like a phantom,
'Long the calm lakeside.

Dashing through the valleys,
Past the fertile farms,
Where the beauteous landscape
Spreads its fairest charms;—
Curving 'round the mountains
Whose bleak summits high,
Crowned with snowy turbans,
Seem to pierce the sky:—

Splashing through the mudholes—
Jolting over stones—
In and out of ditches,
Almost break one's bones;—

THE OLD-TIME STAGECOACH.

Passengers conversing,
  Scarcely can be heard,
For the jolt and rattle
  Mangle every word.

On through town and hamlet—
  Stopping now and then,—
Passengers alighting—
  Others clambering in,
Till at length our journey,
  Thank our stars, is o'er!
And we leave the stagecoach
  Stiff and lame and sore.

THE EVENTS OF A NIGHT.

A PARODY.

ONCE upon an evening rainy,
I was sitting, trying vainly
To arouse my sleepy fancy with a book of ancient lore;
While I sat there reading, thinking,
Soul and body fast were sinking
Into that most sweet, oblivious state I'd often known before,—
That most sweet and most delicious state I'd often known before,—
Much inclined to sleep and—snore.

While I sat there listening, hearing
The fierce storm outside careering
And the windows loudly-rattling as the rain did on them pour;
Suddenly beside the ceiling,
The old clock commenced pealing,
And it struck and chimed the hour as oft it had before,—
Striking long and loud the hour as oft it had before,—
Struck and chimed and—nothing more.

"The fierce storm outside careering."

Then upon my feet uprising,
My sleepy mood but half disguising,
Said I, "Straightway will I that blest land of dreams explore!"
Then with swift despatch undressing,
Soon my weary head was pressing
Pillows that by other heads had oft been pressed before,—
Pillows pressed and rumpled oft by other men before,—
Who shall press them—nevermore.

While upon my couch reclining,
And my form to sleep resigning,
Dreams of past life, joys and sorrows felt in days of yore,
Came across my sleeping vision,
And foul sins of past commission
Rose before me, and their numbers as I scanned them o'er, —
Seemed to my distracted vision as I scanned them o'er,—
Full many a score.

Suddenly a peal of thunder
Seemed to rend my brain asunder,
And all terror-stricken, quaking, out I sprang upon the floor!
There I stood still, trembling, quaking,
Shivering, trembling, quivering, shaking,

With my arms outstretched and palsied and my eyes upon the door!
With my eyes in terror glaring, fixed upon the chamber door!
Stood and gazed and—nothing more.

Sense and reason then returning,
All my foolish terror spurning,
Quick I sprang into the bed and drew the quilts and blankets o'er.
Thus I lay, the time beguiling,
O'er my foolish terror smiling
Till slumber in her soft embrace clasped me again once more,
And bore me to that blissful land of dreams again once more,
To sleep and dream and nothing more.

Scarce had slumber's welcome pinions,
Borne me to her fair dominions,
When a shriek of rage and anguish such as I'd never heard before,
Woke me from my pleasant dreaming,
Sent my blood in horror streaming
Through my veins like streams of fire or the molten iron ore,—
Through my veins in streams of fire like the molten iron ore,
From my heart's deep inmost core.

Up I sprang, my whole soul fired
By the thought of aid required
By some poor and helpless mortal perishing at my very door,
Whom it was my bounden duty,
My very plain and bounden duty
To assist with willing hands against his enemies most sore;
For thus I thought 'twas some poor mortal beset by enemies most sore;—
This I thought and something more.

Then, deep into the darkness peering,
Doubting, wondering, hoping, fearing,
Thinking thoughts no mortal ever thought to think before;
When just below my window shutter,
Came forth a low and dismal mutter,
That scarce could I refrain from smiling at the sympathy I did outpour,—
At the tender, heartfelt sympathy I for a fellow-mortal did outpour,
Who is nameless here forevermore.

Quick I sprang toward the shutter
With many a low-breathed curse and mutter,
Feeling hate and indignation, threatening vengeance most sore
On the cats, the wicked witches,
That with shrill and horrid screeches,

Made the night most hideous with their shrill, discordant roar,—
With their horrid yells and screeches, and their shrill, discordant roar,—
The like I'd never heard before.

Then, far out the window reaching,
Aiming toward where I heard the screeching,
I threw my boot with all my power, (and I don't know but I swore).
I heard amid the raindrops beating,
The sound of frightened cats retreating,
And all became as calm and quiet as it had been before,—
As calmly quiet and as lonely as it had been before,
Except the storm's low roar.

Then, back upon my couch reclining,
To sleep again myself resigning,
My troubles were forgotten and I soon began to snore.
I slept soundly till the morning,
Till the breakfast bell's loud warning
Woke me, and with one quick leap, I sprang out on the floor,—
Out upon the cold and frosty, slippery oaken floor,—
Feeling stiff and sore,

THE OLD GRAY HORSE.

WHY don't I sell the old gray horse, won
that he's old and lame,
With almost nothin' but his skin to cover up his
frame?
Of course he isn't fit for work,—I know he's
almost blind,
An' stiff in both his for'ard legs an' spavined bad
behind.

He's over thirty years old now,—can hardly eat
his hay,
An' most of folks would likely say he's only in the
way;
But, Mister, money couldn't buy that old gray
horse from me;
I mean it, ev'ry word I say; that's just the man *I*
be.

What makes me prize the horse so high? Just lis-
ten while I tell
What that old horse has done for me and why I
won't him sell,
An' when I'm through, I hardly think that you
will disagree,
But say you'd never part with him supposin' you
was me.

THE OLD GRAY HORSE.

It's nigh on thirty years ago that Sue an' I moved here;
This country was all forest then, without a neighbor near,
Exceptin' bears an' wolves an' such, the settlers' souls to fright;—
We used to hear 'em howlin' 'round 'most ev'ry winter night.

But Sue an' I were young them days, been married but a year,
An' had our fortune all to make an' hadn't time for fear.
We built a little house of logs, an' then commenced our toil
A clearin' up the farm we'd bought so we could till the soil.

We had to drive 'bout twenty miles to reach the nearest store,
Where we could buy our groceries to last a month or more;
'Twould take about a day to go, by startin' soon's 'twas light,
An' buy such things as we might need an' get back the same night.

One winter mornin' when the light just showed the comin' day,
We hitched the gray colt up before the one-horse lumber sleigh

An' started for the distant store to buy our stock of goods;
A long and lonely ride it was, 'most all the way through woods.

We done our tradin' at the store, an' then my wife there, Sue,
Had half a dozen calls to make upon some friends she knew,
So that 'twas almost sundown, when we started on the road,
With all our goods tucked in the sleigh, a pooty decent load.

While we were in the store that day, a purchasin' our goods,
I heard a man there sayin' that 'twas dangerous in the woods.
He said the wolves were gettin' starved an' growin' awful bold,
An' then some frightful stories 'bout their ravagin' he told.

Of course I didn't say a word of what I thought, to Sue,
But counted every mile we made as o'er the snow we flew,
Till half the distance we had come, an' then I heard a sound
That seemed to freeze my very soul, an' made the gray colt bound.

That sound I'd often heard before,—the half-
starved wolf's wild yell,
But now it seemed to sound to me just like a
funeral knell!
An' Sue she gave one little scream,—an' then clung
close to me,—
I knew her face was pale as death although I
couldn't see.

I felt my heart sink in my breast. I knew what
that yell meant.
It was the wild wolf's rallying unto his comrades
sent,
An' quicker than I'm tellin' you 'twas answered
back again,
An' then I prayed to God for help an' gave the
gray the rein.

I thought the gray was travelin' some before I
heard that cry,
But after that he stretched himself an' almost
seemed to fly!
The snowballs flew from off his hoofs, like bullets
past my head,—
The forest trees seemed whirlin' by as on our way
we sped.

I felt my heart grow lighter when the gray rushed
on so fast;
An' whispered to my tremblin' wife I thought the
danger past;

But hardly had we both begun to draw an easier
breath,
Before I heard, quite near to us, that fearful yell
of death!

Into the woods to right and left, I quickly cast my
eye,
An' there, in two dark lines, I saw the wolves
a drawin' nigh!
The gray colt saw them too, an' with a shriek of
human sound,
He sprung ahead, his flyin' feet seemed scarce to
touch the ground.

But yet the lean, bloodthirsty wolves seemed
faster still to gain;
We heard their feet a patterin' on the crust like
fallin' rain.
I quickly cast one glance behind, an' there, as plain
as day,
I saw two wolves with open jaws, not twenty feet
away.

I grabbed my rifle that lay in the bottom of the
sled,
An' with a quick but steady aim, I shot the first
one dead!
The others stopped a moment for to taste their
brother's flesh,
An' then with fiercer yells an' howls, they all came
on afresh.

Once more I sent a bullet in amongst the howlin' pack,
But whether one was hit or not, they didn't all stay back;
But on they came a rushin' like the very hounds of hell,
Makin' the old woods echo with each fearful howl an' yell!

But we were nearin' home. At length our clearin' hove in sight,
An' from the windows of our home the light was shinin' bright;
I seen our faithful hired man a standin' in the door
An' then I yelled with all my might as ne'er I'd yelled before:

"Throw open both the barn-doors, John, an' let us quickly in!
We're ridin' for our lives now, John; God grant that we may win!
The faithful fellow lost no time the order to obey,
While close behind, the foremost wolves had almost reached the sleigh.

On dashed the gray colt for the barn faster than fleet winds blow,
While from his nostrils foam-flecks sped like monstrous flakes of snow.

The barn was reached, the gray colt's hoofs
thundered upon the floor,
An' John's strong hands with one quick jerk,
quickly swung to the door.

But none too soon, for one gray wolf came in
beside the sled.
A blow John gave him with the axe, soon laid him
stark and dead,
An' then with swellin' hearts we thanked the God
who rules on high,
For bringin' us all safely home when death had
been so nigh.

When I recall that fearful night, I almost lose my
breath
To think how near both Sue and me were to a
fearful death;
An' but for God who rules above an' gave the gray
colt speed,
The old woods would have seen that night a dark
and bloody deed.

I made a vow that very night to keep the noble
gray
An' care for him, the best I could, until his dyin'
day;
So do you wonder any more, why money can't him
buy?
I think, if you were in my place, you'd do the same
as I.

TOO LATE.

A MOTHER lay in her coffin,—her tired soul had fled,
And children stood around her weeping above the dead.
Flowers lay on the casket arranged with loving care,
For loving hands and hearts had placed the sweetest flowers there.
I thought as I gazed upon the scene, did loving hands e'er place
Flowers within her living hands, with gentle, loving grace?
Were kisses pressed on mother's cheeks when she could feel a kiss?
Did loving hands and tender care give her a taste of bliss?
Did kind acts always help to smooth the wrinkles on her brow?
If not, too late these tokens come,—she cannot feel them now.

A father in his coffin lay,—his heart was stilled in death,
And children gathered 'round his form with low and sobbing breath.

They stooped and kissed the pallid brow and
smoothed the silvered hair,
And spoke in tender, loving words of him who
rested there.
And then the thought came to me:—did father
always hear,
In life, his children's loving words fall gently on
his ear?
Did sons' and daughters' younger hands help him
life's toil to bear,
Or dutiful obedience help lighten his life's care?
If not, too late those tear-drops fall, too late each
loving word.
They should have come when father lived; then
father could have heard.

A wife lay shrouded for the grave,—death's silent
sleep she slept.
A broken-hearted husband knelt beside her there
and wept,
And kisses pressed on marble brow and cheeks
and lips so cold,
And tender words from trembling lips his sore
bereavement told.
And then the thought came to me: did he always
through her life,
Give kindly acts and tender words to her who was
his wife?
Did kisses and caresses make her daily life more
bright?

Did words of commendation make her wifely toil
more light?
If not, remorseful tears fail now past faults to
mitigate.
Those kisses cannot help her now; they come,
alas, too late.

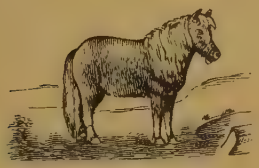
THOSE CITY COUSINS.

HOW proudly we boast of our city-bred cousins,
And tell of the fineries we've seen in their homes;
But we wish they were fewer by two or three dozens;
When spring has departed and summer-time comes.
When the hot, sultry days and the dust-laden breezes
Seem scorching our bodies from ankle to crown,
A shock of displeasure our whole being seizes,
When we hear from our cousins who live in the town.
Those city-bred cousins, those dandified cousins,
Those troublesome cousins who live in the town.

Those city-bred cousins! Oh, aren't they a bother,
To come here to stay through the long, summer days,
Making trouble and work for poor mother and father,
And snubbing us all with their citified ways!
No doubt it is hot in the closely-built city,
And fears of disease fill the mind with alarm,

But still I *do* think that they might have some pity
On their poor country cousins who live on the farm.
But those city-bred cousins, those dandified cousins,
Think we all want to see them out here on the farm.

What trouble our city-bred cousins do make us,
No mortals but country folks ever will know!
And the joy that we feel when they finally forsake us,
Our bright, smiling faces most truthfully show.
There's nothing I know in this wide world of sorrow,
Can give such a sharp, stinging pang of alarm,
As a letter informing us that on the morrow
Our cousins will visit us here on the farm!
Those city-bred cousins, those unwelcome cousins,
We wish they'd forever stay away from the farm!



THE PHARISEE'S PRAYER.

A PHARISEE, in purple dressed,
Within the temple stood,
And gazed around on every side,
With self-complacent mood,
He stood beside the altar there,
In costly robes arrayed,
And lifting up his haughty voice,
In trumpet tones, he prayed:

"O Lord, I thank Thee I am not
Like other men I know:—
Nor wicked like yon Publican,
Whose life must end in woe.
I thank Thee that I do not sin
In word, nor thought, nor deed,
And that, among the growing corn,
I am not found a weed.

"I fast, O Lord, as often as
The law directs me to;
I give to every needy one,
The alms that are his due.
I clothe the poor from my own store,
Supply the beggars' needs,
And fill each day completely full
Of charity's good deeds.

THE PHARISEE'S PRAYER.

"I rob no one of what belongs
To him in his own right;
I only take what is my own,
And never use my might.
I lend my money to the poor,
Always at lowest rate;
I never charge but ten per cent,
And never deviate.

Whene'er I own a mortgage on
My poorer neighbor's land,
I never close and sell him out
Until I've made demand;
And when I am obliged to sell,
I never do oppress,
But only take what is my own,
No more, nor yet no less.

"I've churches built with my own means,
That look both grand and proud;
Academies and colleges
My money has endowed.
I never do the poor oppress,
Nor charge them highest price;
I always give them money, or
Most excellent advice.

"I know that up in heaven, Thou
Hast kept a place for me,
Where, by and by, I'll surely dwell,
In honor, near to Thee.

Then people like yon Publican,
  With us can never dwell,
But far away they'll meet their doom
  In burning, scorching hell."

THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER.

WITH low-bowed head, near by there stood
  A contrite Publican,
Who humbly prayed "Have mercy, Lord,
  On me, a sinful man."

SHAKING HANDS.

THERE'S a language expressed by the grasp of the hand,
Whereby friend gives greeting to friend,
That speaks from the heart with expressions more true
Than lips can to honeyed words lend.

Away with the hand that clasps loosely and cold,
And sends a chill over my form;
But give me the hand that clasps closely and strong,
With a pressure as firm as 'tis warm.

We love the firm pressure of true friendship's clasp,
That shows a soul earnest and true;
Though no sound from the lips breathes of friendship and love
The hand brings the heart into view.

When friend parts from friend for a long lapse of years,
And tears dim the light of the eye,
When the clasp of the hand tells what words can not say,
While the quivering lips speak "Good-bye."

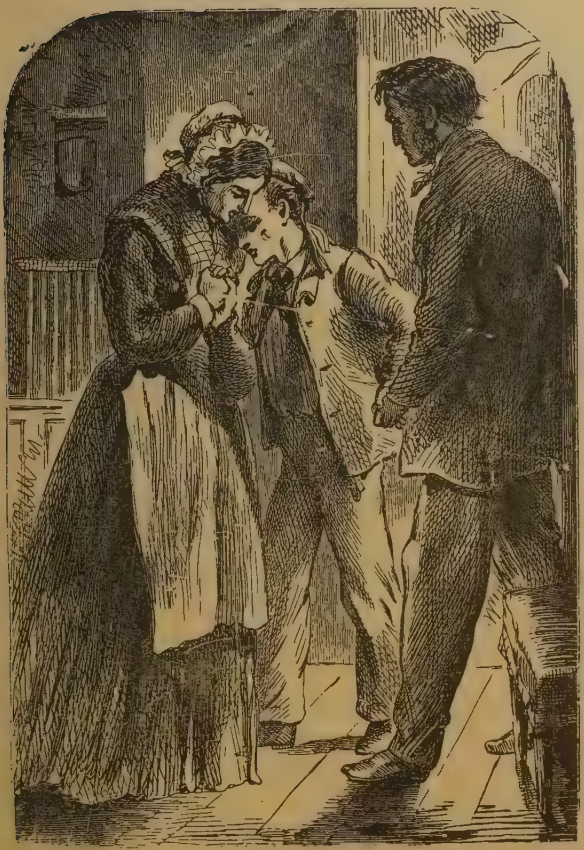
When the boy leaves forever his childhood's dear
home,
To join in the world's busy strife,
His heart proudly throbs with ambition's desire,
And hope brightly gilds all his life;—

But when parting time comes, and the trembling
tongue
Cannot speak what it fain would impart,
Then the lingering clasp of the dear, loved one's
hand
Speaks the language that comes from the heart.

When, after long absence, we meet once again
The friends whom we loved long ago,
The greeting we give them is warmer by far
Than choicest of language can show.

Then words fail to tell what the soul would
express;—
The lips can no language command;
But the heart speaks the words that are best
understood,
In the warm, thrilling clasp of the hand.

When dire misfortune bears heavily down,
And we feel almost crushed by its weight,
The warm hand of sympathy grasping our own,
Speaks more than the lips can relate.



"When the boy leaves forever
his childhood's dear home."

SHAKING HANDS.

When the eye becomes dimmed and the stiffening lips
Breathe no word that the ears understand,
Then the last sign of love comes to us from the soul,
Through the last feeble clasp of the hand.

When the pale hue of death gathers over the form,
Of a loving and dearly-loved friend;
And the last, feeble gasp for the expiring breath
Plainly tells us that this is the end,—

Then how weak and unmeaning all words to our ears,
Though spoken in tones soft and bland;
But we yearn for the sympathy better expressed
In the warm, tender clasp of the hand.

When my last moment comes and my nearly freed soul
Is pluming its pinions to fly,
May I feel the warm clasp of a hand that I love,
That tells me a true friend is nigh.

THE QUILTING BEE.

'ROUND the motley-colored bed-quilt,
Stretched upon the quilting-frame,
Sits a group of busy women,
Single, married, maid and dame.
How the nimble, flying fingers
With the busy tongues keep pace!
Thoughts and muscles both competing
In a manu-lingual race.

Now they descant on the weather,
Of the heat or of the rain,—
Try to interest each other
On those topics, but in vain.
Then they speak of dire diseases
Frighting all the country 'round,
Draping happy homes with mourning,
Placing loved ones 'neath the ground.

Now the fact grows clear and clearer
To a fair, unbiased mind,
That the topic most congenial
They thus far have failed to find;
But, toward it they are tending,
Working with a cautious care,
Till among the group, one woman
Speaks, and hits the subject square.

"Have you heard about Miss Judson?
But I know you have, of course;
Some one ought to tell her mother
Ere the matter grows to worse."
"*Now do tell!* We haven't heard it,
But we always *thought* her bad;
If at last she's caught in error,
I for one can say I'm glad."

"Have you heard how Mary Lincoln
Carries on with Mr. Brown?
Why, the way those two are acting
Is the talk of all the town!
She's a good-for-nothing hussy,
And if people served her right
A fine coat of tar and feathers
Would adorn her some dark night!"

"Have you heard how the new preacher
Flirts with Deacon Benson's wife?
I declare! Were I the deacon,
I believe I'd take his life!"
"But the deacon's not an angel
Though he is so loud in prayer;
For they say he's 'most too friendly
With that hussy, Fanny Dare."

"Did you notice 'tother Sunday,
How they acted in the choir?
Ellen Sommers knew I saw her,
And her face turned red as fire!

Jimmy Long, who sings the tenor,
Sat a squeezing of her hand!
Such mean actions right in church time
Are enough to sink the land!"

"Have you noticed Julia Martin,
How she flirts with Doctor Gray?
Everybody thinks it shameful
How those two do carry sway!"
"I don't know what next will happen;
Folks are growing worse and worse.
Things are going on so dreadful,
It will surely bring a curse!"

Thus each absent neighbor suffers
From the tongues that scandal moves;
More's the pity tongues of women
Should glide on in such base grooves.
But at length the quilt is finished,
And the scandal too is done,
Work and mischief both accomplished, —
Better neither'd been begun.

THE FATE OF SIR THOMAS TURKEY.

A THANKSGIVING SKETCH.

ON a fertile farm in Vermont state,
Many years before this present date,
Dwelt a haughty lord of as goodly band,
As ever roamed over Yankeeland.
With stately step o'er the farmyard sod,
Like an autocrat, he daily trod;
As if leading his band to deadly fight,
His armor gleamed in the bright sunlight.
His clarion voice would clearly sound,
Waking the startled echoes 'round,
As he shrieked defiance left and right
And dared to combat each hostile knight.

When chilly night around him closed,
On no downy couch his limbs reposed,
But he perched himself from mankind aloof,
On the ridge of some antique woodshed roof;
There his ghostlike form loomed 'gainst the sky,
In weather calm or when storms raged high.

His life in summer was wild and free,
As he roamed unrestrained o'er hillside and lea,
Capturing grasshoppers that chanced in his way,
And displaying his plumes in the glare of day;

But when autumn came and the crops were shorn,
He daily fed on the golden corn,
Till his stalwart form grew plump and round,
And he moved less gracefully over the ground:
And he strutted less, though he ate the more,
Of the heaped-up corn on the old barn floor.
He little dreamed of the fate in store
For his lordship, ere a short month more.

He deemed the hand that dealt him food
Would ne'er be stained with his heart's best blood:
For he reasoned like many humans do,
That what *seems* good must of course *be true.*
But humans as well as turkeys find
Ofttimes there is something hidden behind
An oily tongue and a smiling face,
More full of deceit than kindly grace.

Thus time passed on, and his lordship grew
More plump as all well-fed turkeys do.
Till the morn before Thanksgiving Day,
He heard the stalwart farmer say,
"Old Tom is fat enough to slay;—
We'll eat him on Thanksgiving Day."

That night while Tom unconscious slept,
The farmer's boys in silence crept
Up to his roost, and ere he thought,
They had him by the leg fast caught!
He struggled hard and shrieked in pain,

But all resistance proved in vain;
They placed his neck across a block,
The axe descended with a shock,
His quivering body rolled aside,
And thus poor Tom ingloriously died.

In water hot his form was dipped,
And then deft hands his feathers stripped.
Bereft of feathers, head and feet,
And other parts unfit to eat,
His body then was quickly put
Within the oven scorching hot.

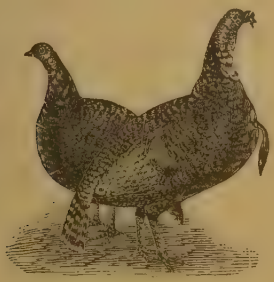
At noon on that Thanksgiving Day,
His half-cremated body lay
Displayed to view in royal state
Upon a mammoth, earthen plate.
The farmer then, with knife in hand
And smile upon his features bland,
Proceeded to dissect his breast,
His wings, his limbs and all the rest

The long, pine table thickly spread
With dainties from its foot to head,
Was soon filled 'round with hungry ones,—
The farmer's wife and girls and sons;
Each plate was filled and piled up high
With breast and stuffing, wing or thigh.

Then all was hushed. Each head bowed low,
While father's voice in accents slow,

Gave thanks to God for every good,
And blessing craved upon their food.
The brief prayer o'er, each knife and fork,
By nimble hands was set at work,—
Each hungry one began to eat
Of roasted turkey, rich and sweet.

Oh, sad was Sir Tom Turkey's fate!
His bones lay scattered 'round each plate!
No sepulcher will them enclose,
No headstone tell to friends or foes,
No monument, pointing toward the skies,
Will tell where Tom's dead body lies,
Nor sound his praise nor tell his fame,
Nor keep in memory dear, his name!



THE AULD WIFE IS GONE.

AN old man stood in the darkened room
Where his dead wife coffined lay;
His form was bent with four-score years,
And his cheeks were wet with trickling tears,
And I heard his voice in the dusky gloom,
In mournful accents say:—

"You have beat me, Nell, a little; you have crossed
the river first,
You have reached the golden city and have heard
the joyous burst
Of the charming angel music, where the anthems
ring and swell;
You have seen the sights of heaven which no mor-
tal tongue can tell.

"Oh, how oft I've prayed to Heaven that when
death at last should come,
It might take us both together to our everlasting
home;
We have lived so long together that I hoped we
both might die
And our souls go on together in their journey to
the sky,

"But you've gone on first and left me when we
wanted both to go.
It was hardly like you, Nelly, to go on and leave
me so,
But I s'pose the angels called you: yet I hardly
think it kind,
When we've lived so long together, to leave me
alone behind.

"Last night while I was sleeping all alone, for you
were gone,
Such a happy dream came to me of the happy
years now flown;—
In my dream I saw your features as they looked in
years gone by,
When the auburn tresses clustered where the
snowy locks now lie.

"We were sitting both together in the noonday of
our life,—
I was a happy husband and you a happy wife,
And our children, little Willie and our darling
little May,
By our sides were romping gayly, happy in their
childish play.

"I forgot that both are sleeping in the churchyard
on the hill,
Where the flowers bloom in summer and the
winter winds are chill,

I forgot the grief we suffered when we knew they both were dead,—
I forgot the bitter tear-drops o'er their little graves we shed.

"In my dreams I heard you singing, and your voice was sweet and low,
While you sang the songs that pleased me in the years of long ago;—
I have heard the sweet notes ringing in my ears this whole day long,
And the words come plainly to me of that well-remembered song.

"Oh, I'd like to dream on always as I did on yesternight,
And I'd like to see you always as you looked so sweet and bright,
And I'd like to see our children as I saw them plainly then,—
Oh, I'd like to live on always, dreaming that dream o'er again.

"But my dream too quickly ended, and I wakened with a groan,
To find myself there lying in my widowed bed alone;
And, oh Nell, it seemed so lonely when I knew you were not there,
That a weight of grief came on me, almost more than I could bear.

"All alone! oh, Nellie darling! oh, that dreary
word—*alone*!
Bitterest word that mortal tongue or mortal ear
has ever known.
Never did I know its meaning as it came to me
this morn
When I found myself forsaken and my poor, old
heart forlorn.

"Why, oh Nellie, did you leave me in this world
so drear and cold?
Did you care less for me, Nellie, now that I have
grown so old?
But my heart was young, still, Nellie, and my love
was just as true
As it was when we were younger and I told it first
to you.

"But I s'pose it's wrong to murmur, for you're
happier, I know,
Than ever I could make you in this cold world here
below;
But I cannot help the wishing that I lay there by
your side,—
That when death came for you, Nellie, we together
might have died.

"I know that you will miss me in that world so
bright and fair,
And amid the joys of heaven, you will wish *I* might
be there;

And when the gate shall open to let one more soul
come home,
You will look around so eagerly to see if *I* have
come.

"You will kiss our children for me when you meet
them in the sky,
And tell them father's coming; they will see him
by and by;
And you'll ask our Father, Nellie, if His pleasure
it might be,
He will send His angel quickly with a message
after me.

"And you'll meet me, won't you, Nellie, just inside
the pearly gate?
I will heed the summons quickly so you won't have
long to wait;
And you'll greet me, Nellie darling, with that dear,
sweet, wifely kiss
When you bid my spirit welcome to that world of
endless bliss.

"Then we'll live on there forever, for no dying
there is known;
And we'll never know how sad it is for one to be
alone;
And our children will be with us; then how happy
we will be
Living through the countless ages of a blest
eternity."

A SCENE IN SCHOOL.

'TWAS a sunny day in summer;
Through the open schoolhouse door,
Came a flood of golden sunshine,
Lighting up the well-worn floor.
At their desks the silent pupils
Conned their lessons, word by word,
And the humming of the insects
Was the only sound there heard.

For the teacher, stern and scowling,
Had the dreadful edict spoke:
That the first one caught at whispering,
Should receive the ferule's stroke.
In his chair, the pupils facing,
Sat the teacher grim and stern,
Watching for the luckless urchin,
Who would first the edict spurn.

Suddenly the teacher started!
Fire flashing from each eye!
Little Gracie Brown was whispering—
Whispering to Johnnie Nye.
"Grace!" the irate teacher thundered;
"Grace! You wicked girl! Come here!
I will give you one good whipping
That will last you all the year!

A SCENE IN SCHOOL.

Little Gracie's slight form trembled,
And a tear came in each eye;—
When she stood before her teacher,
By her side stood Johnnie Nye.
"Johnnie!" spake the teacher sternly,
"Take your seat. I called not you.
Take your seat and do it quickly,
Or you'll get a whipping too!"

Then spake Johnnie, little hero,—
Round and full the brave words came;—
"Teacher, please don't punish Grace,
Whip *me*, *I'm* the most to blame.
Gracie wouldn't never whispered,
But *I* whispered first to her,
Let *me* take the whipping, teacher,
Please, and pardon Gracie, sir."

From his face the frown departed
And a tear came in each eye,
While the teacher softly murmured,
"Noble little Johnnie Nye!
Take your seats both little darlings,"
And he spake no other word;
But the punishment intended
Was indefinitely deferred.

WATERMELONS.

THE shades of night were gathering thick,
As strode with footsteps firm and quick,
A youthful Afric, black as night,—
One thought filled his heart with delight—
Watermelons.

Over the fence with nimble feet,
He sprang, the luscious fruit to greet;
Then feeling carefully around,
The object of his search he found—
Watermelons.

His eyeballs rolled in wild delight!
He searched around from left to right,
And soon he held beneath each arm,
As if to shield them safe from harm—
Watermelons.

In haste the sooty urchin strode
Toward his home, along the road,
Nor stopped to rest his weary feet
Nor yet with hungry zeal to eat
Watermelons.

Behind the house he sat alone;
A bright smile o'er his features shone

As he proceeded with a will,
His mouth and stomach both to fill
With watermelons.

Ere long this nigger boy, alas!
Lay down and rolled upon the grass,
And groans of anguish from him burst,
As wildly he wept, wailed and cursed
Watermelons.

His family, in sore affright,
Sent for a doctor in the night
The doctor came and shook his head,
And only this one word he said—
Watermelons.

Before dawn came of the next day,
The poor boy's soul had passed away,
The coroner his jury brought,
And viewed the corpse; then spoke his thought—
Watermelons.

They placed him 'neath the cold, damp ground,
And soon, from out that little mound,
A plantlet grew with twist and twine,
And bore upon its creeping vine
Watermelons.

MY FIRST SCHOOLMA'AM.

SHE was tall and slim and bony, and the hair upon her head
Was not auburn, black nor golden, but its hue was fiery red,
And her voice was shrill falsetto, and when raised in angry tone,
Seemed to pierce like poisoned dagger, through the flesh e'en to the bone,

How we urchins used to tremble when we saw the angry frown
Gather o'er her freckled forehead, draw her sandy eyebrows down;
And our teeth would fairly chatter in an agony of fear
When we heard that voice falsetto say in rasping tones, "*Come here*!"

Well we know no prayers for mercy would avail for mischief done,
But the pain and tears and sorrow would repay us for our fun;
And with trembling steps unwilling, out we'd march upon the floor,
Feeling in anticipation, blows we'd often felt before.

Then she'd grasp us by the collar, bend us quickly
o'er her knee,
And our faces pointing downward, showed acutest
agony,
While the swift-descending ferule was succeeded
as it fell
On our closely fitting trowsers, by an agonizing
yell.

She would punish dereliction with an unrelenting
hand,
And insisted on obedience to every command;
But I'll never cease to thank her that she taught,
and taught me well,
How to read and write and cipher, parse and con-
jugate and spell.

BE KIND TO MOTHER.

BE kind to mother when her form
With age is bent and weak;
Let kindly acts her old heart warm,
And gently to her speak.
Her dear, old heart will deeply feel
Each unkind word you say,
And tears will down her pale cheek steal,
You cannot wipe away.

Be kind to mother; years ago,
Beside your cradle bed
Her voice, in accents sweet and low,
Your cradle ditty said
She trained your little feet to walk,
And with a mother's care,
She taught your childish voice to talk,
And speak your infant prayer.

Her cheeks, now grooved with wrinkles deep,
Once beamed with beauty's glow;
Care's lines, which on her pale brow sleep,
Were not there once I know.
Those dear, gray hairs so thin and white,
Were auburn once, or gold;—
Those dim, old eyes once glistened bright
With mother-love untold.

BE KIND TO MOTHER.

Those wrinkled hands have toiled for you
  Through many a weary day;—
Those dim old eyes have wept for you,
  When you have gone astray.
Then strive to make her last days bright;
  The best that you can do
Will never more than just requite
  What she has done for you.

THE OLD SCHOOLMASTER'S VISION.

IN bed the old pedagogue's form lay reclining,
And closed were his eyelids in slumber serene;
The moonlight that over his gray locks was shining,
Spread over each ringlet a silvery sheen.
A vision came to him;—his bed seemed surrounded
With pupils he'd taught in the years long gone by,—
Like sweetest of music each well-known voice sounded,
And bright was the gleam of each dear, sparkling eye.

Each hand grasped his own in a warm clasp of greeting,—
Each eye beamed with love and affection so dear,—
Each heart with the noblest of impulses was beating,—
Each voice whispered words that his old heart did cheer.
They were children no longer. Each well-defined feature
Showed manhood's proud stamp and the soul of a man,

As they stood by the bedside around their old
teacher,
Each seemed a fit leader to stand in the van.

Grave senators, judges, physicians and teachers,
Whose names are enrolled in the temple of fame,
With lawyers and authors and eminent preachers,
Each crowned with esteem and an honorable
name.
Each spoke of the past and related his story,
How he climbed up the steep, rugged mountain
of fame;
And each gave the teacher a full meed of glory,
And blessings called down on his venerable
name.

The pedagogue's heart beat with rapture and glad-
ness,
His soul felt a thrill of sweet, ecstatic joy;
And tears wet his eyelids, but not tears of sadness,
But tears such as hearts filled with pleasure
employ.
He felt that when life with its toils should be
ending,
When bidding adieu to earth's pleasure and
pain,
Results he would see on his labors attending,
To prove to the world he had not lived in vain.

The vision now changed. The old teacher lay dying,
And forms bowed in mourning, surrounded his bed;
Then angels' bright forms down from heaven came flying,
And a halo of glory about him they shed.
His eyelids were closed, but a sweet smile was wreathing
The pale, wrinkled lips that would open no more,
And the mourning ones know from his low, feeble breathing,
He was stepping close down to the dark river's shore.

Once more the scene changed; and on bright, golden pinions,
The angel forms hastened towards heaven above,
Bearing on to their home in those blissful dominions,
The pedagogue's spirit to mansions of love.
With songs and with anthems of heavenly meter
They drew near the place where could enter no sin;
When loudly they shouted, "Saint Peter! Saint Peter!
Come quickly and let our old schoolmaster in!"

THE SEASIDE YOUNG WIDOW.

I MET her; 'twas out on the strand,
I chanced to be passing along;
The waves dashing o'er the white sand,
Were chanting a low, mournful song.
She sat on a bench all alone,
And heard not my steps drawing near,—
The sunlight that over her shone,
Disclosed on her pale cheek, a tear.

My whole heart in sympathy stirred
At sight of her pitiful woe;
I longed but to offer some word,
My kindly emotions to show.
I longed to sit down by her side
And speak words of comfort and cheer;
But fears that I might be denied
Kept me from approaching more near.

I silently gazed on the grief
Displayed in the garments she wore,
And thought of the wondrous relief
That colors, for grief, have in store.
Her dress was the hue of the night,—
Her veil and her bonnet likewise,
No glimmer of anything bright,
Her raiment disclosed to my eyes.

THE SEASIDE YOUNG WIDOW.

I watched her for a minute or two,
(The tear-drops bedimming my eyes),
When, conscious perhaps of my view,
She turned with a glance of surprise.
The tear-drop was glistening still,
A diamond of brilliancy rare;
It sent through my heart a quick thrill,
And I blushed to the roots of my hair.

I stammered some words of excuse,
That I never had meant to intrude
My presence on grief so profuse,—
Hoped she wouldn't consider it rude.
A sad smile played over her face,
Her hand brushed the tear-drop aside,
And kindly she offered a place
For me on the bench by her side.

With thanks I accepted the seat,—
Inquired why thus she did grieve,
And heard her the sad tale repeat
Of sorrow I fain would relieve.
Perhaps it was wrong thus to haste,
(But there's much that we do that's amiss),
My arm stole around her small waist,
And my lips met her own in a kiss.

We talked for an hour or more,
Of the joys and the woes of this life,
That Fate might be having in store
For many a husband and wife.

THE SEASIDE YOUNG WIDOW.

At length we pronounced the good-byes,—
  One instant her hand clasped my own;
I saw two bright tears in her eyes,
  As I turned and left her there alone.

Moons passed till a twelvemonth was neared;
  (I'd forgotten the scene on the strand),
When before me there sternly appeared
  A sheriff with warrant in hand.
In vain I protested that I
  Was guiltless of crime or of wrong;
The sheriff disdained to reply,
  But forcibly took me along.

The crime of which I was accused,
  Was a breach of a promise to wed.
I reflected, but mem'ry refused
  To recall any word I had said,—
Any promise to marry the one,
  For whom I a prisoner was placed;
But she swore to the act I had done
  When I sat with my arm 'round her waist.

Of course I was beaten, because
  The widow was wondrously fair:
And to keep from the clutch of the laws,
  Cost more than I wanted to spare.
But I think I've gained wisdom with years,
  And while I remain upon earth,
All widows I see shedding tears
  Will be given by me a wide berth.

MY NEIGHBOR'S WIFE.

SHE'S a darling little creature,
With blue eyes and golden hair,
And her voice is like the music
Of a well-remembered air.
When she came to be my neighbor,
Quite a change came o'er my life,
For I was not long in learning
That I loved my neighbor's wife!

'Twas not many weeks thereafter,
Ere the matter came to light,
For the neighbors learned my weakness,
And declared it was not right.
One by one they came and told me
It would surely come to strife,
If I didn't stop this wicked
Loving of my neighbor's wife!

Conscience told me it was sinful
Thus to place my love on her;
But my heart was sadly smitten,
And 'gainst conscience did demur.
So betwixt my heart and conscience,
There arose a daily strife,—
Conscience pleading for my neighbor,
While my heart beat for his wife.

MY NEIGHBOR'S WIFE.

If I had a wife to cherish,
And to care for of my own,
Doubtless I would then consent to
Leave my neighbor's wife alone;
But my heart is sad and dreary,
And so lonely is my life,
That I find I *must* love *some* one,
So I love my neighbor's wife.

I have tried to do my duty—
Tried the very best I could
To obey the ten commandments,
As by me they're understood;
And I find among those maxims
That should rule and guide my life,
That I ought to love my neighbor,
Then why not my neighbor's wife.

WHY IS IT?

WHY is it that this world of ours
Is full of care and woe?
Why is it that weeds instead of flowers,
Spontaneously grow?
Why is it some are born to wealth,
To honors and to ease,
While others groan and sigh for health,
Oppressed with fell disease?

Why is it stolen kisses are
So very, very sweet?
Why fruits forbidden seem most fair,
And pleasantest to eat?
Why do those things beyond our reach
Seem fairest to the eye?
Why does the sloping, ocean beach
Seem fairer far than nigh?

Why are the dreams and hopes of youth
More beauteous than in age?
Why fiction shines more bright than truth,
Upon the printed page?
Why is it easier to trace
The faults of human kind,
Than in the lowliest of our race,
Some little good to find?

WHY IS IT?

Why are the choicest gems of earth
  Hid deepest in the ground?
Why are the pearls of highest worth
  Beneath the ocean found?
Why are earth's highest joys we know,
  As fleeting as the breath?
Why do the sweetest flowers blow
  One day, then droop in death?

Why is it that when woman falls
  From virtue's lofty plane,
No woman's hand will heed her call
  To lift her back again?
Why is it that when woman errs,
  (Man equally to blame),
The suffering and woe are *hers*,
  He does not bear the shame?

Why is it life has grief and pain
  Instead of naught but joy?
Why is there always some fell bane
  Our pleasures to destroy?
Is it because there's One above,
  To Whom all praise be given,
Who chastens us in holy love,
  To make us fit for heaven?

THE CHRISTIAN PAUPER'S FUNERAL.

NO sad-toned bell doth sound,
To tell the tidings 'round,
A soul hath flown.
No mourner's tears are shed,
Where his cold form lies dead,
Unwatched, alone.

A plain, cheap box contains
All that on earth remains
Of one whose life,
With hunger, want and woe,
Such as the wretched know,
Was one long strife.

No kin on earth had he;
Alone he wearily
Plodded through life.
Around his dying bed
No mourning tears were shed
By child or wife.

No panegyric sweet
The priestly lips repeat,
Over his clay;

Forgotten will he be,
By human memory,
  In one brief day.

Friendless he died alone,
Unheard his last, low moan,
  By mortal ear:
They found him cold and dead,—
Dead on his pauper bed,—
  No watcher near.

They placed him 'neath the ground,
And heap a rude earth-mound
  Over the dead.
No flower blossoms there,
Planted with loving care,
  Above his head.

THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

AN old man and his good wife were seated all alone,
Beside the cheerful firelight that on their features shone;
The silver hairs, by sorrow bleached, becrowned each aged head,
And with a low, sad voice, the wife unto her husband said:

"I wonder where our Willie is this dark and stormy night?
I only wish we had him here by our own fireside bright.
'Tis fifteen years ago to-night since Willie left his home,
And we have never heard from him, where'er the boy may roam.

"I've often thought we both were harsh and cruelly severe.
We tried to bring him up too strict;—we tried to make him fear
Instead of love us, as he would have done had we been mild;
But by our harsh words and our acts we drove away the child.

"I never will forget that night, the night he left
our roof;—
We spoke to him in bitter tones, with words of
harsh reproof.
I know he'd done some little act we'd told him not
to do;
But Willie listened silently until we both were
through.

"And then he rose up from his chair and walked
toward the door,—
A look of sadness in his face we'd never seen
before;
For Willie's heart seemed always light and full of
joy and pride;
He seemed to look at everything upon the bright-
est side.

"Before he passed outside the door, he stopped
and turned around
And spoke to us with trembling words and voice of
hollow sound:—
'I cannot find the love at home for which my heart
appeals,—
I'll go and find elsewhere, perhaps, some heart
that for me feels.'

"He spoke and passed out in the night; we heard
his steps depart,
And every footfall seemed to crush down deep into
my heart.

We've never looked upon his face since that dark, dreary night,
But often have we prayed to God to guide our boy aright.

"Our home has been a saddened one these fifteen dreary years;
We've wept, when we have talked of him, such bitter, briny tears;
We've prayed that he might win a place among respected men,
But all our prayers and all our tears won't bring him back again.

"I thought I heard a rap, just now, upon the outside door;
Go, husband, see! I thought I heard the rapping once before.
It may be that some traveler, perchance, has lost his way,
And saw our house and stopped to ask for guidance or to stay."

The husband rose and ope'd the door. A form stood just outside,
Which, to the old man's questioning look, in trembling tones replied:

"I've traveled miles since morning broke, and feel so weak and sore,
I called to crave admittance at your hospitable door;

I only ask for food and rest, a place to sleep to-
night,
And then my journey will renew at early morning
light."

No chord within the old man's heart, warm pity
seemed to feel,
But in stern tones he answered thus the wanderer's
appeal:

"We keep no inn nor lodging-house;—there's
plenty near at hand,
Who'll lodge and feed the wanderer with money at
command;
Such places you should seek, not this; so go you
there, I pray,"—
And waved his hand as if to warn the traveler
away.

Then spake the good wife from her chair beside
the firelight glow,
Which showed a face deep seamed with care, and
hair as white as snow:
"O husband, we've a boy somewhere, unless the
child be dead,
Who mayhap now is asking for some place to lay
his head.

"We'll take the stranger in and give him welcome
and our care;
We've food enough and beds enough, our bounty
let him share,

And mayhap, should our wandering boy be homeless this dark night,
Some stranger hearts may welcome him beside *their* fireside bright."

The husband opened wide the door to let the traveler in;
A tall and comely man was he, with silky-bearded chin.
The good wife gave one startled look, one scream of joy, and then
She clasped him in her arms and cried: "*Our Willie's home again!*"

The strong arms clasped those aged forms in one close, fond embrace,
While tears of joy and happiness coursed down each wrinkled face;
For 'twas their son, this wanderer, returned, no more to roam,
But with his presence and his wealth, to bless the dear, old home.

For he had wealth in ample store, brought from far distant lands;—
Not bought by crime and godless deeds, but earned by unstained hands;
And often do the happy three, beside the hearthstone bright,
Thank God the wanderer returned on that dark, stormy night.

THE BACKWOODS PREACHER.

HE could not boast of college lore acquired,
But love for God and man his whole soul fired.
Where'er his feet the forest pathway trod,
The settlers welcomed him, that "Man of God."
His sinewy arms the glittering axe could wield,
Or guide the plow across the stump-strewn field,
Or point the rifle with unerring aim,
And send the bullet through the panther's frame.

His garments ne'er were pressed by tailor's goose,
Nor fashioned for display, but rather, use;—
His good wife's nimble fingers cut and made
The garments which his reverend form arrayed.
Each elbow of his coat displayed a patch,
With one upon each knee, the same to match;
His boots were made the forest paths to thread,
And not the parlor's carpets soft to tread.

His presence cheered the toil-worn settler's life,
And eased the duties of the patient wife;
With counsel born of tender, soulful love,
He sought their little troubles to remove.
The children loved to gather 'round his knee,
And gaze into his face admiringly,
While he, with homely words and accents sweet,
Some story from the bible would repeat;—

How faithful Abraham on the altar laid
His son, and how his arm by God was stayed,
And he commanded to release the boy
And lead him to his home again in joy;—
How Joseph, by his cruel brethren sold,
Lived to befriend them and their father old;—
How David slew the giant with a stone,
And lived to sit upon a nation's throne;—

How Daniel in the lion's den was thrown
By wicked men, and left to die alone;
But God held back the beasts with His strong arm,
Nor suffered them to do His prophet harm;—
How angels sang on that eventful morn
When Christ the Savior of mankind was born;—
How that same Christ whom bad men crucified,
Asked God for pardon for His foes, and died.

His house of worship was the settlers' home,
Or forest wild roofed o'er with heaven's broad dome;
Nor recked he where he preached or knelt in prayer,
So that the Spirit of his God was there.
The settlers gathered on the Sabbath day,
From far and near, to hear him preach and pray,
And souls drank in the blessed message poured
From lips that spake in love, the Master's word.

He practiced not the rhetorician's art,
But spake the language of a guileless heart,
O'erflowing with a love as deep and wide
As ocean's bounds marked by the swelling tide.

The swaying tree-tops seem to bend an ear,
His innate, untrained eloquence to hear;
And when his voice arose in notes of song
The birds joined in to help the strains along.

Methinks I see e'en now his reverend form,
Like some tall pine unharmed by many a storm.
Towering aloft in majesty alone,
While lesser trees the tempest has o'erthrown.
Methinks I see his locks of silvered hair,
Circling a crown by age and thought made bare;
The steel-bowed glasses resting on his nose,
Cover his eyes, but yet their light disclose.

One bony hand is pointing toward the skies,
The other one on the sacred volume lies,
While he expounds Jehovah's great command,
In language plain backwoodsmen understand.
Anon the tear-drops steal adown his cheeks,
While of the Savior's love to man he speaks,
Coupling the dire decrees 'gainst sinful man,
With Mercy's offers of Salvation's plan.

Each hearer listens with attentive ear,
The gospel message from his lips to hear;
Nor heed they that his language is uncouth,—
They know that their pastor's words are gems of truth.
They love him, for they've tried him and they know
He'll stand close by their side in weal or woe,
With hand and voice to comfort and to cheer,
When death's dark, chilling shades are drawing near.

THE DISTRICT SCHOOL-MEETING.

THE farmers and their stalwart sons of District Number Four,
Convened within the old schoolhouse, in numbers twice a score,
To vote for district officers to serve the coming year,
And transact other business such as might to them appear.

A candle in an inkstand thrust, gave forth a sickly gleam,
That made the shadows on the walls like hideous goblins seem.
Back in one dismal corner lurked some six or seven boys
Who came to show their breeding and skill in making noise.

Old Nathan Jones, a pompous man, extremely adipose,
Drew forth his pocket handkerchief and loudly blew his nose;
Then slowly rose upon his feet, ahemmed, and cleared his throat,
And said, "I've a few words to say, then we'll perceed to vote!

"Perhaps some of you gentlemen don't feel the awful weight
That's restin' on our shoulders here; I tell you, friends, it's great.
Of course poor folks, like most of you, don't hardly realize,
But we that's got the money, look at things with clearer eyes.

"We've got to practice 'conomy in Deestrict Number Four,
An' cut expenses down somewhat,—about a third or more.
We've paid out too much money, altogether, this past year,
An' all the burden comes upon a few of us that's here.

"I haint no hand at findin' fault, an' don't when things goes right,
An' that's the reason why I come to talk to you to-night.
I want to git expenses down to what they ort to be
An' make this deestrict-robbin' give place to strict 'conomy.

"We've paid out for the year just past, a pooty good, round sum,—
Almost a hundred dollars for six months schoolin' done;

We ort to hire a teacher here for fifty cents a day;
I think thet price is big enough,—all we had ort to pay.

"An' let the teacher board around as teachers used to do,
So that the payin' don't all come so heavy on us few;
I believe in so dividin' things that all can do their share,
An' I am sure you won't deny that proposition's fair.

"When I was young an' went to school, the teacher boarded 'round,
An' everybody thought 'twas right; no fault was ever found.
I got *my* education there in that same deestrict school,
An' when it comes to *learnin,'* no man takes *me* for a fool."

And then he blew his nose again and placidly sat down,
And gazed upon the audience with magisterial frown;
As if to say, "*I've* made *my* speech, let him who dare, oppose!"
Then from his seat back near the stove, old Jacob Thompson rose.

"My friends," he said, "I can't agree with brother
Jones to-night;
His notions of *economy* I hardly think are right;
There's such a thing as *saving* where 'tis better to
expend,
And *cheapest* things, we often find, are *dearest* in
the end.

"Last year we had a teacher here, the *cheapest* we
could find;
I think our district never'll want another of *that*
kind.
We paid the lowest wages we have paid in many a
year,
And when we come to sum it up, it cost us mighty
dear!

"We didn't get no benefit for all that we've paid
out;
The teacher, near as I could learn, was nothing but
a lout.
He didn't know enough to teach, or else he tried
to shirk,
At all events, 'tis plain to see he didn't do his
work.

"I want to see our district school the best there is
in town;
But we can't make it so by putting teachers' wages
down.

My vote shall go to any man to be our next trustee
Who'll do his best to serve the school in his capacity."

Then Jacob quietly sat down, and Jones again arose,
And whisking out his handkerchief, once more he blew his nose;
Then, with the most sarcastic words his tongue could bring to use,
Commenced to pour on Thompson's head a torrent of abuse.

Then Thompson's friends declared this course was neither fair nor right,
And coats were quickly thrown aside prognostic of a fight;
While Nathan's satellites began to put on martial show,
And loudly called on Thompson's friends to test it blow for blow.

The air grew thick with brawny fists, each voice joined in the din,—
Each party dared the other one the carnage to begin.
The God of War grinned hideously to urge on the affray
And gentle Peace her pinions spread and sadly flew away.

The moderator loudly rapped for order but in vain,
And shouted to the angry men from fighting to refrain.
His shouts and raps accomplished naught, but only strained his lungs,
Until the angry ones completely tired out their tongues.

No eyes were blacked, no bones were crushed, no human gore was shed,
No coroner was notified to come and view the dead;
But what might otherwise have been a bloody scene that night,
Became a bloodless one because each was afraid to fight.

The men put on their coats again and sulkily sat down;
Each gazed on his opponent with a grim, unfriendly frown;
Then some one nominated Jacob Thompson for trustee,
And Nathan Jones's friends named *Jones* to be their nominee.

The balloting proceeded with some necessary noise,
And now and then a rousing cheer proceeding from the boys,

Until at length the polls were closed, the balloting
was done,
And Thompson was elected by the majority of
one.

Then Thompson's friends cheered lustily, and
swung their hats on high,
And all the boys joined in the din with whoop and
yell and cry;
But Nathan's friends, dejected, slowly passed out
through the door,
Feeling that things had gone to wreck in District
Number Four.

WHO TOOK HIM.

BACK from the grand, luxurious homes,
Where dwell the rich and great,
Where costly viands tempt the taste,
And liveried servants wait,—
Back from the scenes of pride and wealth,
Beside a narrow street,
Where want and penury combine,
To make man's woes complete.

Within a dismal attic room,
Upon a narrow bed,
A sick and crippled boy reclined,
Sorrowing for the dead.
His mother's corpse had just been placed
Within a pauper's grave;
No lot seemed left for him but death,
Though others he might crave.

Within that little, dismal room,
His nearest neighbors came,
To talk about what should be done
With Jimmie, sick and lame.
One neighbor said *his* house was small,
His children rude and wild;
And hence, however much he wished,
He could not take the child.

Another feared that doctor's bills
  Would run up long and large,
And burdensome on him, if he
  Should take the child in charge.
One woman said if she were well
  And strong as some she knew,
She'd take the child and care for him
  The best that she could do.

Another said the almshouse is
  The place for such as he;—
Such children never should be born
  To live on charity!
As if the foolish woman thought
  Poor Jimmie was to blame
For being brought into the world,
  A cripple, sick and lame.

While thus they talked they little knew,
  How cruel was the smart,
Their careless words inflicted on
  Poor little Jimmie's heart.
He turned his face towards the wall,
  His bitter grief to hide;
God only seemed to love the child;
  He had no friend beside.

Then one by one the neighbors passed
  Out from the dismal room,
Till none were left but he alone,
  Surrounded by the gloom.

Dark night came on with dismal shapes,
All fraught with terrors wild;
No sound disturbed the deep gloom, save
The sobbing of the child

Next morn a kind-souled neighbor came
And looked into the room,
She thought the child might hungry be,
Or lonely in the gloom.
The little light that entered there,
Through one poor window small,
But half disclosed the ragged bed,
And dingy, mouldy wall.

She stood a moment at the door,
To hear if Jimmie stirred,
But though she listened eagerly,
No sound of life she heard.
With quickened steps she crossed the room,
And stopped beside the bed;—
Poor Jimmie's crippled form lay there,
But cold and still and dead.

Hugged closely to the dingy wall,
As if he feared the night
Had terrors in its gloominess,
His timorous soul to fright,—
Surrounded by the gloomy shades,
No ear to hear him groan,
No voice to soothe the dying pain,
Poor Jimmie died alone.

An undried tear-drop resting there,
Upon his pale, cold cheek,
Told more of man's unfriendliness,
Than many words could speak.
The neighbors gathered in the room,
And many tears they shed;
Those who were cold to him in life,
Now wept beside him, dead.

No question now of who should take
And care for that poor boy;
God took him to His own, bright home,
To everlasting joy.
The richest lords on earth are poor,
Beside poor Jimmie now;—
A crown, more bright than earthly ones,
Is resting on his brow.

THE SPRING ON THE HILLSIDE.

HOW well I remember the farm where I rambled,
In childhood's bright days in the years long ago,—
The steep hillside pasture where lambs skipped and gamboled
And bleated in joy as they raced to and fro.
And well I remember the spring that came gushing
From 'neath a huge rock on the side of the hill;—
Its clear sparkling waters came leaping and rushing
Adown the steep slope in a bright, purling rill.

The cattle and sheep used to come there together,
Their fill of its clear, cooling waters to drink,
And stand in the rill in the hot, summer weather,
And crop the rich grasses that grew on its brink.
With ripple and gurgle it seemed to be saying:
"I've a mission of good in the world to fulfill;—
The wish of the Master I'm only obeying,
And doing my part to display His good will."

THE SPRING ON THE HILLSIDE.

No water, I thought, could be sweeter or colder
Than that of the sparkling and bright, dancing rill
That gushed from the base of the moss-covered boulder,
And ran singing down the steep slope of the hill.
Is igh for a drink from that cool, sparkling fountain
That tasted so sweet in those bright days of yore;
I sigh for a ramble o'er meadow and mountain,
To gaze on the scenes of my childhood once more.

A LADY'S HAT.

To a lady who requested the author to write a poem describing his ideal hat.

INDEED Miss Abbie, what you ask
Is certainly the hardest task
I've ever undertaken:—
To write about a lady's hat,
And write in poetry at that,
My muse will hardly waken.

If all the world should undertake
To force my skilless hands to make,
My style of lady's bonnet,—
And then when done, should it express
My beau ideal, I should guess
The world would frown upon it.

'Tis difficult to tell to you,
The shape or size, or e'en the hue
I'd have a lady's bonnet;
Or how I'd have the ribbons tied,
The spangles up and down the side,
Or e'en the flowers on it.

I do not think I'd have it high,
Nor low, broad-rimmed to shield the eye,
Nor plain to please the preachers.

A LADY'S HAT.

I never should admire a "scoop,"
Those horrid things that make you stoop
To see the wearer's features.

I'd have a lady young and fair,
Her style of bonnet choose with care,
And make a good selection,—
Something to match her form and size,
Coquettish like her sparkling eyes,
And suiting her complexion.

I'd have a lady old and gray,
Wear something not too bright and gay,
But suited to her station:—
Something plain and dark in hue,
Neither white, nor red, nor blue,
Suggesting moderation.

I'd have a bride wear naught but white,
Suggestive of her hopes so bright
That see no dark to-morrow: -
But mourner's hat of darkest hue,
Adorned with crape to plainly shew
The depth of her great sorrow.

I'd have a lady's hat so made,
Whate'er might be its shape or shade,
Its *style* should suit the wearer:—
I'd have it add to beauty's form,
Enhancing each attractive charm,
And make a fair face fairer.

A LADY'S HAT.

I'd have some bows, a feather too,
And flowers of a modest hue,
  Gemmed with the dews of morning:—
I'd have it placed upon the head
So neatly, that naught in its stead
  Could be half so adorning.

THE SOLDIER'S WIDOW.

FAR up the steep and rugged mountain side,
Where towering pine trees spread their branches wide,
And mountain oaks and maples drop their leaves
When Autumn's blasts wail through the ripened sheaves,
Where wintry blasts howl through the leaf-reft trees,
And drifting snow whirls on the chilling breeze;
Or, where in hot and sultry summer days,
The feathered songsters warble forth their lays,
And flowers bloom in colors bright and rare,
And shed their fragrance on the ambient air,
There, on that steep and rugged mountain spot,
There stands a soldier's widow's lonely cot.

Within sits she whose lone and saddened life.
With happiness and pleasure once was rife,—
A husband's arm she loved to lean upon,
And hear the prattle of her little one.
Those days for her were filled with sweetest joy,
And want and penury could not annoy.

But when Secession's fierce, destroying hand
Was reared aloft to smite our much-loved land,
And desecrate upon the shrine of Mars,

THE SOLDIER'S WIDOW.

Our nation's glorious galaxy of stars,
That husband's patriot soul in ardor rose
Against the Union's blind and bloody foes.

His weeping wife he bade a fond adieu,
Then kissed his little boy, then donned the "blue,"
And with his soldier comrades marched away
To fight for flag and country in the fray.

Days, weeks and months dragged drearily on,
With scanty tidings from the absent one;
And as each night the young wife knelt to pray,
Hoping good tidings on the coming day,
She prayed that Heavenly Power might guard the form
She loved so well, and shield it from War's storm.

One summer day when eve was drawing nigh,
And Luna's rays were lighting up the sky,
A letter came. With nervous hand she tore
The fastening seal, then glanced the white page o'er.
A shriek of woe burst from her stricken soul!
A loud, despairing shriek that told the whole!
And then her limp and lifeless form sank down
In one long, death-like swoon, upon the ground.

The startled child forsook his happy play,
And crept across to where his mother lay;
Then sought in vain, with childish artlessness,
To wake her with his pleading and caress.

The morning came. Kind neighbors gathered 'round
And raised her lifeless form from off the ground.
An open letter lying by her side,
Told the sad tale. Her husband died
Upon the field of blood, where rang the steel,
Where flowed the blood and burst the cannon's peal,
And carnage fiercely raged,—where bullets sped
Upon their deadly mission, and the dead
In grim and ghastly heaps lay piled around,
And human gore in streams traversed the ground,
He fell among the bravest of the brave,
And died, his land and Freedom's cause to save.

The widow lives, but life for her is drear;
She lives, but only for her child so dear;
And oft she tells him of that fatal day,
When happiness forever passed away;
And bids him, while she holds him to her side,
To love that land for which his father died.

THE APPLE-PARING BEE OF OLDEN TIME.

CHEERILY the farmer's children,—
Noisily and with delight,
Gather in the rosy apples
For the "paring bee" at night.
Glorious times they have in autumn
When the laden apple trees
Shed their loads of luscious fruitage
For the evening paring bees.

When the twilight shadows gather,
And the candle's glimmering light
Shines amid the gathering darkness
Of the gloomy autumn night,
Then the country lads and lasses
Gather in from far and near,
To assist in paring apples,
And enjoy the evening's cheer.

All around the spacious kitchen,
Some on benches, some on chairs,
Sit the merry youths and maidens,
Some in groups and some in pairs.
While they pare the rosy apples
With deft fingers plied apace,
Lively, sparkling conversation
Lights with smiles each youthful face.

THE APPLE-PARING BEE OF OLDEN TIME.

Brightly burns the glowing backlog
In the wide-mouthed fireplace,
Making sparks that up the chimney,
Joyously each other chase.
O, what memories bright and golden,
Of the youthful days now flown,
Crowd the mind with scenes of pleasure,
Known around the old hearthstone!

Jokes and merry peals of laughter
Help to make the evening's cheer,
And no thought of woe or sorrow
Is permitted to appear.
Bashful swains cast stealthy glances
Toward the face each loves the best,
While sly Cupid plants his arrows
Deeply in each youthful breast.

When the evening's work is ended,
Then the farmer's bustling wife,
Aided by her blooming daughters,
Hands each guest a plate and knife;
Then they bring the luscious cookies,
And the golden pumpkin pies,—
Choicest viands for the palate,
Such as e'en *gods* won't despise.

After lunch the chairs and benches
Quickly disappear from sight,
And the room is cleared for dancing,—
Chiefest pleasure of the night.

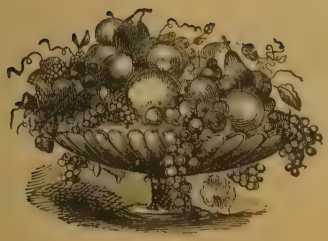
Then some rustic, fiddling genius
Tunes his wheezy violin,
Touches up the bow with rosin,
For the dance will soon begin.

Now the merry youths and maidens
Take their places on the floor,
And the older men and matrons
Talk about the balls of yore,
When they too were young and merry,
And it was *their* chief delight,
To join in such scenes of pleasure
As they're witnessing to-night.

How their light feet swiftly trip it,
Dancing gaily 'round the ring!
And some rustic, practiced dancer
Wildly cuts the "pigeon wing."
How the player sweats and fiddles
"Old Zip Coon" and "Rory Moore!"
While the dancers' feet keep pattering
To the tune, upon the floor.

But at length, the tall, old house clock
Tells the morning hour is near,
And from out the nearest farmyard,
Sounds the voice of chanticleer.
Then the maidens don their bonnets,
While each youth, with quivering knees,
Asks his girl in trembling whisper,
"May I be your escort, please?"

O, those happy days are over,—
Over to return no more!
But their memories bright and golden,
Cheer us till we reach Death's shore.
When grandchildren gather 'round us,
Clambering upon our knees,
How our hearts thrill while we tell them
Of those old-time "Paring Bees."



THE TRAMP'S STORY.

KIN I sleep in yer barn to-night, Mister?
It's cold lyin' out on the ground,
With these fall rains a drizzlin' so chilly,
An' these cold winds a whistlin' around.
Oh, no, I don't use no tobacker
Nor carry no matches to light,
An' I won't harm a thing if ye'll let me
Jest sleep in yer barn over night.

"Well, no; I haint had any supper,
An' I own I feel hungry a bit,
For I haint had a mouthful since mornin';
But I hated to ask ye for it.
Did ye ask me how long I've been trampin',
An' livin' this kind of a life?
I'll tell ye my story, kind mister,
Though it's like cuttin' my heart with a knife.

"I once had a home an' a fam'ly, –
A wife an' a sweet, little boy,
An' each night when I came in from workin',
Their smiles filled my heart full o' joy.
Of course I worked hard for our livin',
But then I was healthy an' strong,
An' the thoughts of the wife an' the baby
Kinder eased the work hours along.

"It's two years ago now last summer,
(I'll never forget that sad day,)
A stranger came out from the city,
All dressed up so fine an' so gay.
He was tall an' erect an' nice lookin',
An' 'peared like a man who had wealth;
He wanted to stop in the country
An' board for a while for his health.

"My wife said she'd like to be earnin'
A little to add to our hoard,
An' she coaxed till I finally consented
The stranger should come there to board.
He seemed to have plenty of money,
An' pleasant an' kind in his way;
He'd fondle an' play with the baby
Near half of the time ev'ry day.

"An' Ellen,—my wife's name was Ellen—
Seemed happy as happy could be,
An' kept herself lookin' so nicely;—
I thought it was done to please me.
I wasn't a man to be jealous
Nor doubtin' the love of my wife;
I b'lieved she was true as an angel,
An' loved me with all of her life.

"But after a few weeks, I noticed
In Ellen a bit of a change;
She seemed to care less for the baby
An' me too, which seemed to me strange.

When I'd come in the house in the evenin',
  After workin' so hard through the day,
She'd sit an' be lookin' so sober,
  An' hardly a word would she say.

"A neighbor lived close by our dwellin',
  (Just a garden betwixt him an' us,)
An' he told me he feared that our boarder
  Would git us, some day, in a fuss.
He thought that the fellow wa'n't honest,
  An' didn't mean well to'ards my wife;
But he made me so mad with such hintin',
  I felt just like takin' his life.

"I told him to mind his own business,
  An' let other folks's alone,
An' sweep, if he could, his own dooryard,
  An' I would attend to my own.
Oh, fool that I was not to listen,
  When I knew that he only meant well!
If I'd took the advice of that neighbor,
  My life would have been less a hell!

"I thought that the girl I had married
  Was true as a woman could be;
An' I'd swore that no power could make her
  Abandon the baby or me.
But I b'lieve that the finely-dressed stranger
  Was Satan himself in disguise;
An' I haint got so much blame for Ellen,
  For women aint always o'erwise.

"One day when I came from my workin',
An' whistlin' away in my joy,
An' thinkin' how happy the welcome
I'd git from my wife an' my boy;—
I thought that our cottage looked lonely,—
No wife standin' there in the door
To give me a smile an' a welcome,—
'Twas seldom she'd missed it before.

"I felt my poor heart growin' heavy,
An' sink in my bosom like stone,
When I looked through our neat, little cottage
An' found I was there all alone.
I hunted from garret to cellar,
An' out in the garden around;
But no sign of the baby or Ellen
Was anywhere there to be found!

"I saw somethin' looked like a letter,
Somebody had placed on the stand,
An' as soon as my eyes rested on it,
I took it up into my hand.
The few words I found on it written,
Were enough to make any man wild;—
They told me the boarder an' Ellen
Had gone, an' had taken our child!

"Next mornin' the neighbors they found me
A wanderin' 'round all alone;
They said that my face looked so haggard,
An' my eyes like a crazy man's shone.

THE TRAMP'S STORY.

What happened I can't well remember,
  Till a whole week or so had gone by;
But my head an' my heart felt on fire,
  An' I wished that I only could die!

"The neighbors they treated me kindly,
  An' done for me all that they could;
But their well-meant expressions of comfort
  Didn't do my poor heart any good.
I knew that I couldn't rest easy,
  If it took ev'ry day of my life,
Till I'd had my revenge on the scoundrel
  Who'd stolen my child an' my wife.

"I've tracked them from city to city,
  Like a bloodhound I've followed their trail,
An' often been footsore an' weary,
  'An my poor heart 'most ready to fail;
But I've kept the fierce fire a burnin'
  In my heart till it's made it a hell!
An' ev'ry one, most, calls me crazy,
  An' mebbe I am; I can't tell.

"I found where they stopped once last winter,
  An' there my poor baby had died,
I went to the grave where they laid him,
  An' then, for the first time, I cried.
I didn't stay long in that village,
  But hurried away on my road;
For the thought of my boy lyin' buried,
  Seemed urgin' me on like a goad.

"Last night I went into a farmhouse
To ask for a mouthful to eat,
An' while eatin' the food which they gave me,
(A nice piece of bread an' some meat,)
I heard the good farmer's wife tellin'
Her husband how hard she had tried
To find out the name of the woman
Who came there so sick an' had died.

"I don't know what made it, but, Mister,
I felt such a jump at my heart,
Like we feel when some dreadful thing happens
So sudden it gives us a start;
An' somethin' seemed crowdin' me to it,
To ask the whole story to hear,
Of the woman who came there in sickness,
An' died with no friends of hers near.

"Then she told me the whole story over,
Of the woman who came there one night,
So sick with a hot, ragin' fever,
An' died just before it was light;—
She told how she raved in her frenzy,
An' called for her husband an' child,
In language so piteous an' longin',
It made all the fam'ly 'most wild.

"She showed me the shawl she wore 'round her,
An' the sight of it 'most took my life,
For I knew, then, the woman she told of
Was Ellen, my poor, erring wife!

They led me into the churchyard
An' showed me the bare, little mound
Where Ellen lay quietly sleeping
Alone, 'neath the damp, chilly ground.

"They spoke to me kind words of comfort,
But I begged to be left all alone,
For my grief seemed too heavy for kindness,
An' my heart felt as cold as a stone.
All night I lay there in the churchyard,
Alone with my Ellen—my wife!
An' I prayed that the bright light of mornin'
Might never shine on me in life.

"I thought I heard Ellen's voice speaking;
It seemed to come up from the sod,
An' it asked me so gently an' sweetly
To leave my revenge all to God.
It pleaded so long an' so earnest,
That at last my hard heart seemed to melt,
An' I promised to do what she asked me
While there at her cold grave I knelt.

"Of course I'd forgiven poor Ellen
Before she had asked me the boon;
But the man who stole her an' my baby,
I cannot forgive *him* so soon.
I s'pose there's a God up in heaven,
For so I've been taught to believe,
An' I hope that He'll give to the scoundrel
The doom that he ought to receive."

THE DYING SIOUX CHIEF.

WHERE the rugged Rocky Mountains rear
their peaks to kiss the sky,
And the flower-garnished prairies stretching east-
ward greet the eye,
Dwells a tribe of dusky warriors, whose forefathers
brave and free,
Roamed the rugged hills and pariries ere the white
man crossed the sea.

In a little grove of cottons near the towering
Rockies' base,
Stands a group of sturdy warriors; but deep gloom
is on each face;
In their midst a form is lying, and each ear in that
dark throng,
Bends to catch the solemn cadence of their chief-
tain's low death song.

In a fight with Union soldiers, when the charge
was hotly pressed,
Fell the gallant old Sioux chieftain with a bullet in
his breast;
But his comrades caught him falling, bore him to
the grove away,
Strove to staunch the red blood's flowing, and
their chieftain's life to stay,

But he knew the wound was mortal; knew that
death was near at hand;
Knew that soon would roam his spirit in the
Indians' Spirit Land;
And a smile o'erspread his features that no pain
could ever dim,
While his voice in feeble accents called his faithful
braves to him.

Then out spoke the dying chieftain, but his voice
was low and weak,
"Gallant brothers, brave Sioux warriors, hear the
dying words I speak:
Let no desecrating footsteps mar our fathers'
sacred graves;
Guard our hunting-grounds as closely from the
hated, pale-face braves.

"Bury me beside my fathers, 'neath the tall, wide-
spreading trees,
Where the voice of the Great Spirit whispers in the
evening breeze;—
Close beside my sleeping body place my faithful
dog and gun;
In the Spirit Land I'll need them;—brave Sioux
warriors, I have done!"

Then his mind began to wander 'mong the years
long since gone by,
And in feeble tones he uttered once again the
battle-cry.

Now again in dreaming fancy, his brave Sioux
warriors led,
Hurling death among the living, scalping now the
stiffening dead.

Dreams he now of scenes and dangers in the years
of long ago,
When he chased the savage panther and the wild,
fleet buffalo—
When he joined the thrilling war-dance with his
warriors by his side—
When he wooed the dusky maiden who was once
his dark, Sioux bride.

Then again his fancy pictured the bright council-
fires' flame
And the circling warriors shouting honors on their
chieftain's name,
And his piercing, dark eye brightens as he seems
to hear the sound
Of his tried and trusted warriors as they closed the
circle 'round.

But the changing dream is over, and now once
again he sees
His stern warriors gathered 'round him 'neath the
green-hued cotton trees;
And he sees their saddened glances bending on
their dying chief—
Sees their dusky bosoms heaving in unspoken,
silent grief.

THE DYING SIOUX CHIEF.

Then his pale lips slowly open and he chants the
wild death song,
And the gentle whispering zephyrs waft the sad,
weird notes along.
Chants he of his deeds of daring, scalps he's taken
in the fight,
Chants of massacres and captures in the lone, dark
hours of night.

But his song grows faint and fainter, dying into
whispers low,
And their ears can scarce distinguish words that
from his pale lips flow.
Suddenly his eyelids open, from his lips escapes a
moan,
Then a gasp, and his freed spirit to the Spirit Land
has flown.

Softly sigh the evening zephyrs through the lofty
cotton trees,
And their leaflets gently quiver to the motion of
the breeze;—
One by one the bright stars glimmer where the day-
light scarce has fled,
Peering down upon the warriors and the old Sioux
chieftain—dead.

CARRIE AND I.

IT was evening, and the moonlight
Shed a mellow radiance 'round,
And the summer zephyrs murmured
'Mong the leaves with plaintive sound.
Far above the bright stars twinkled
Like ten thousand angel eyes
Looking down on earth below them
As in joyous, mute surprise.

Side by side we two were sitting
On the quaint, old, rustic seat,
And a brooklet's limpid waters
Laved the shore just at our feet.
Not a word had either spoken
For the last half hour or so,
But we sat in silence, thinking,
While we watched the river flow.

I was wishing that the brooklet
Were the placid stream of life,
And that I could sail upon it
With sweet Carrie for my wife.
What a blissful, happy voyage,
I was thinking ours might be
If my gentle, darling Carrie
Would consent to sail with me.

But I feared to ask the question,—
Trembled lest she answer nay,
And the bright and rosy vision
Like a dream be swept away.
Then I turned and gazed upon her
As she sat unconscious there,
And I envied the light zephyr
Toying with her auburn hair.

Then my head drooped low and lower
Till her ringlets swept my cheek,
And my throbbing heart was wishing
That my coward tongue would speak.
Softly stole my arm around her—
Pressed her closely to my side
As I murmured, "Carrie, darling,
Will you be my bonny bride?"

Not a word the maiden answered,
But my soul was filled with bliss
When she turned her sweet lips upward,
And I pressed on them a kiss.
Still the bright stars glowed and twinkled
In the azure sea above,
And we called them eyes of angels
Smiling down upon our love.

SECOND PART.

Farmer John's Theology

and other

POEMS IN DIALECT.

FARMER JOHN'S THEOLOGY.

WHAT church do I belong to? Well, I don't belong to none,
If I knew just which was the *best*, I think I'd j'ine that one;
But 'mongst so many creeds an' forms, it's difficult to choose,
Especially for a man like me who's got peculiar views.

I b'lieve in God who made all things an' rules them by His will,—
I b'lieve in Christ who came on earth His precious blood to spill.
I b'lieve there is a Holy Ghost, an' b'lieve that all these three
Are j'ined in One, and that They make the Holy Trinity.

I b'lieve I've got a soul to save,—the special gift of God,
That will live on forever when this body's 'neath the sod.
I b'lieve the bible, ev'ry word is true jest as 'tis writ.
An' b'lieve we'll come out pooty straight if we jest foller it.

FARMER JOHN'S THEOLOGY.

I've read the bible through an' through to find
which creed is best;
Which is the surest, safest one on which the soul
may rest;—
But I can't find a word therein about the different
creeds;—
All I can find is that a man is saved by faith an'
deeds.

I've tried to find which way is right, to sprinkle
or immerse;
But not a chapter can I find or even one small
verse
That tells us whether Christ was plunged beneath
old Jordan's wave
Or sprinkled with the water-drops when God His
spirit gave.

It seems to me if one is wrong an' t'other one is
right,
We'd find some chapter or some verse to give a
little light.
I hardly think that Jesus Christ would failed to
mention it
If He had known that one was wrong an' t'other one
was fit.

I don't believe the doctrine that I hear some peo-
plè preach,
That when God gave us all our souls, He fixed the
fate of each,—

That some may do the *worst* they can, they'll go to heaven straight,
While others, though they do their *best*, can't get in through the gate.

I don't believe the man who prays the *loudest* is the best,
Nor he who wears the longest face is better than the rest.
I think the man who brags the most about his *honest* ways,
Is jest the one whose deeds won't bear a scrutinizin' gaze.

I don't believe *that* woman's heart is 'zactly free from guile
Who always sees the *darkest* side, an' never thinks to smile;
I don't believe an angel wears a *frown* upon its face,
An' frownin' women, up in heaven, would jest be out of place

I don't believe it's Christian-like to scorn a fallen one,
Nor tread her deeper in the mud for some misdeed she's done;
But take her kindly by the hand an' lead her from her sin;—
'Tis better than to conquer worlds, an errin' soul to win.

FARMER JOHN'S THEOLOGY.

I b'lieve the *best* theology is love to God an' man,—
To do for both in ev'rything, the very best we can;
An' if we live up to this rule, we'll find, when life is o'er,
We've got a pass to let us in through heaven's golden door.

FARMER JOHN ON INFIDELITY.

WHAT'S that you say? You don't believe
there's any God at all?
No God that made the sun an' moon, an' all things
big an' small?
Well, that's the queerest doctrine, yet, I think I've
ever heard!
That must be what the preacher calls a doctrine
most absurd!

No God that made the sun an' stars an' put each
in its place,
An' set each one a rollin' in its lightin'-footed
race?
I think, somewhere, the bible calls a man like that
a fool;
It seems to me such men can't have the senses of
a mule.

No God? No Christ? No heaven? No hell? No
soul to lose or save?
No angels nor no great, white throne? No life
beyond the grave?
No meetin' of the dear, loved ones who went on just
before?
No claspin' hands nor greetin's on the ever-
bloomin' shore?

FARMER JOHN ON INFIDELITY.

I can't believe things come by chance,—that all
just happened so;—
That there's no God who makes the trees an' grass
an' flowers grow,
An' keeps the planets rollin' in their courses 'round
the sun,
An' day an' night come regular just as they first
begun.

I can't believe this world is all that we shall ever
know;—
I can't believe the grave's the end—that life ends
here below;—
I can't believe that burnin' hell is nothin' but a
scare
To keep men decent here on earth through fear of
goin' there.

I'd rather take the doctrine that was taught me in
my youth;—
When father talked of God an' Christ, I b'lieve he
told the truth.
When mother used to kneel by me an' teach me
how to pray,
I know I never shall forget the words she used to
say.

I b'lieve the bible is the guide from God to mortals
given,
That points out plain the narrow road that leads
from earth to heaven.

FARMER JOHN ON INFIDELITY.

I b'lieve that unrepented sin He'll punish by and by
When on the judgment day He'll bid the nations all draw nigh.

I don't care if this whole world rise upon its feet an' tell
That there's no God, no Christ, no soul, no heaven nor no hell,
And though a thousand Ingersolls should shout it in my face,
I shouldn t budge a single inch;—it wouldn't change the case.

I'll let the skeptics sneer an' laugh an' in derision shout;
Some day, perhaps when 'tis too late, the truth they will find out;
But I'll go on believin' in the bible, heaven an' hell,
An' try to end up right, an' see if *they* come out as well.

FARMER JOHN TELLS ABOUT THE NEW PREACHER.

WELL, Sary, we've got our new preacher
All settled as slick as a pin;—
The neighbors turned out pooty gin'rous,
An' soon got his goods all moved in.
But Sary, you needn't say nothin,'
But I think they are terribly poor;—
Their things looked so awfully common,—
Not better than ours I'm sure.

An' Sary, I b'lieve we shall like them,
They acted so friendly an' good;
In puttin' up stovepipes an' bedsteads,
They both helped us all that they could.
An' Sary, you mustn't get jealous
If I brag of the minister's wife;
But she's got just the purtiest of faces
That ever I've seen in my life.

She don't look much more than a baby
Herself, she's so teeny an' small;
But she knows how to work, I can tell you,
An' that is the best of it all.
She tried to look smilin' an' happy
An' worked herself 'most out of breath,
A gittin' us men-folks our supper;
I know she was tired to death.

FARMER JOHN AND THE NEW PREACHER.

I tell you she fixed up the victuals
So ev'rything tasted just right;
I always thought *you* good at cookin',
But I b'lieve she can beat you a mite.
She sat there so smilin' an' rosy,
A passin' the tea an' the bread,
An' we men-folks a eatin' so hearty,
It just done her good, so she said.

Then after we'd got through our supper
An' was talkin' of comin' away,
The preacher he took down the bible
An' read, an' then knelt down to pray.
An' Sary, I don't know that ever
I've heard in my life, such a prayer;—
It came from the heart of the preacher,
An' touched ev'ry one that was there.

They thanked me for what I had helped them,
An' asked me so much about you,
An' told me to call on them often
An' bring you along with me, too.
I guess, just as soon as they're settled,
We'll hitch up old Dolly an' Sam
An' drive up an' make 'em a visit,
An' take 'em some beef an' some ham.

I pity these Methodist preachers,
They haint got no home of their own;
I think we'd all like it much better
If Conference would leave them alone.

Just as soon as we get so we like them
An' feel so we want them to stay,
Their two or three years is expired,
An' Conference sends them away.

An' Sary, I can't help but pity
The Methodist ministers' wives;
This movin' all over the country,
I think must just wear out their lives.
But yet they 'most always seem happy
An' content with just what they have got;
But if *you* were in their place, Sary,
You'd grumble, I think, at your lot.

I like our good Methodist doctrine,
I b'lieve it's the best of them all;
But I wasn't cut out for a preacher,—
I'm glad that I haint got a call.
I'd rather work hard all my lifetime,
An' live on a crust an' a bone,
Than move all about as a preacher,
An' not have a home of my own.

But I s'pose there's a home in the future,
Where the Methodist preachers will go
An' live through the ages eternal,
When their work is all done here below.
An' I s'pose that the good Lord of heaven,
Rememberin' her troubles in life,
Will save a bright home there in glory,
For the Methodist minister's wife.

FARMER JOHN TALKS ABOUT CHURCHES.

I'VE been to sev'ral churches, an' their doctrine's
'bout the same;
'Bout all the difference I can see is only in their
name;
They all seem to be steerin' for the good, old place
above,
An' seem to be relyin' on God's great, forgivin'
love.

The Methodists an' Lutherans, the Baptists an' the
rest,—
I like the doctrines of them all; I don't know
which is best;
There's very little difference so fur as I can see,—
They all believe in God an' in the Holy Trinity.

They all believe that Christ was sent to save poor,
fallen man
By makin' free to ev'ry one salvation's generous
plan.

They all believe that ev'ry man from all his sins must flee
If he will get a place in heaven through all eternity.

But yet they'll sometimes argue an' dispute about their creeds,
'Bout dippin' or 'bout sprinklin', as if *these* are savin' deeds.
Sometimes they'll quarrel an' get mad about some small church law
That in the minds of thinkin' men don't all amount to straw.

They all seem to be workin' hard the same good place to win,
By goin' straight upon their road an' steerin' clear of sin.
I b'lieve that some from ev'ry church will find that place some day,
Though some, of course, will falter an' fall out an' lose their way.

If all the churches would jine hands an' do the best they can
To make this old world better an' to lift up fallen man,
There'd be no need of quarrelin' over forms or small church laws,—
Such things, when balanced 'gainst men's souls, are just as light as straws.

FARMER JOHN TALKS ABOUT CHURCHES.

I think, when we all come to die an' leave this
earthly sphere,
The question won't be asked of us *what* church we
'tended here;
But if our souls are found to be all clean from
ev'ry sin,
Saint Peter'll open heaven's door an' tell us to
step in.

FARMER JOHN'S DISCOURSE ON HUMAN NATURE.

I TELL you, Sary, there is lots of good in this world yet,
Though some folks say an honest man is hardly to be met;
They needn't draw their faces down an' look so mighty sad,
For men are not all rascals yet, an' women aint all bad.

They'll tell us of long years ago when this old world was young,
How fast the good, old patriarchs to ev'ry virtue clung.
They'll tell us how they kept the law an' worshiped all day long
With timbrel, harp an' voice an' good, old-fashioned Hebrew song.

They'll tell us how old Abraham his wondrous faith displayed,
When he, his own, his only son upon the altar laid.

They'll tell us of the wonders wrought by Moses' magic rod,
How Solomon, the wisest man, a temple built for God.

They'll tell us of the good they done, those men of long ago,
But not a word are we allowed of their bad deeds to know;
They try to make us think that vice an' wickedness an' sin
Are things of later date than that; but they have always been.

I don't believe the men of now are worse than them of old;
I b'lieve we've got some 'mongst us here with hearts as true as gold.
I b'lieve we've folks as good an' true's the world has ever had,
For men are not all rascals yet, an' women aint all bad.

I believe that human natur' is the same as in those times
When David strung his harp an' sang his sacred Hebrew rhymes.
I b'lieve there's good an' bad mixed through mankind from then till now; –
That some are good an' some are bad, of course all must allow.

You can't tell always, by the looks, what's deep
down in the heart;—
A man may wear a smilin' face while actin' some
bad part.
A woman sometimes smiles an' pets a man until
he's blind,
But yet he don't know nothin' of the workin's of
her mind.

There's Mary Blaine, the wildest girl 'most ever I
have seen;
But yet I don't believe that girl would do a thing
that's mean;
She'll talk an' joke an' laugh an' romp, an' make
some people mad,
But yet I never knew a thing about the girl that's
bad.

She's got a heart, an' showed it too when old Nan
Brown was sick;—
Old Nan was poor, an' so of course her friends
wa'n't over thick;
But Mary went an' stayed with her an' nursed her
a long spell
Until she brought her 'round again, alive an' smart
an' well.

There's old Bill Jones—old Miser Bill,—you've
heard them tell of him:
He's got a pile of money, though he lives most
awful slim,

You'd hardly think that such a man as he has got a heart,
But, Sary, old Bill acted once the good Samaritan's part.

You know, last winter, old black Joe was taken very sick;—
The doctors said it was smallpox! The neighbors scattered quick.
Joe had no friends to 'tend on him; all stayed away in fear;
We all were scared to death almost, an' didn't dare go near.

Then old Bill Jones came there to Joe's an' spoke up like a man:—
"I don't know much 'bout sick folks, but I'll do the best I can."
For days an' weeks, 'thout any pay, he stayed by old Joe's side;
An' hadn't it a been for him, old Joe would surely died.

There's Jennie Gray, the merchant's wife,—she holds her head so high
An' looks so scornful-like an' proud when she is walkin' by;
No one would think she has a heart a beatin' in her breast;
But, Sary, she has got a soul as noble as the best.

When Widder Sanford's boy was sick:—ye know
the widder's poor,
An' death was loudly knockin' at her poor, old
shanty door,
Then Jennie Gray went quickly there just like an
angel bright,
An' watched by Willie Sanford's bed from eve till
mornin' light.

An' then, at last when Willie died, a shroud the
lady brought;—
A costly casket came there too, which Jennie's
money bought.
She helped the widder through the whole, just like
a sister would;
I tell ye, Sary, in *such* hearts there must be some-
thing good.

There's old John Green;—old swearin' John;—I've
often heard them tell
There's no salvation for *that* man. He'll surely
go to hell;
But, Sary, I have seen old John do things would
make you stare!
Though I don't know he ever prayed or ever
thought of prayer.

When old Miss Gage,—her husband's blind,—was
out of wood last week,
Old swearin' John he found it out but didn't never
speak

To any neighbor how it was, but loaded up a load,
All his big team could ever draw up that steep, slippery road.

An' when the woman offered thanks to him for what he'd done,
He swore his wood wa'n't worth her thanks; he surely wanted none.
I stood close by where I could see his eye, an' it shone bright;
I know he felt, down in his heart, that he was doin' right.

When old Joe Simmons broke his leg, his fam'ly was so poor
'Most ev'rybody thought that they'd go to the poorhouse sure;
Old swearin' John he swore a streak, an' said it shouldn't be!
He'd just take Joe an' all his folks in his own family!

You know last summer, when I fell an' broke my good, right arm,
An' none but you to do the chores an' care for the old farm;
Our neighbors, ev'ry one turned out in forces good an' strong,
An' wouldn't take a single cent, but rushed the work along.

FARMER JOHN ON HUMAN NATURE.

I tell you, Sary, there's some good in ev'rybody's heart;
It only takes the 'casion to give the good deed a start.
Some folks are always findin' fault about their neighborhood,
When, if they'd only do what's fair, they'd find their neighbors good.

We've lived nigh twenty years or more right here in this same place;
We've never brought a scowl of hate on any neighbor's face;—
They've always treated us first-rate,—the children, you an' me,
An' all's gone off as pleasant as we could wish to see.

Now folks may growl an' fret an' swear, an' say the world aint right;
We know there's good in ev'ry heart, something will bring to light.
They needn't draw their faces down an' look so mighty sad,
For men are not all rascals yet, an' women aint all bad.

FARMER JOHN'S PHILOSOPHY.

WELL, Sary, we are gettin' old. It's over sixty years
Since first we ope'd our eyes on what some call this vale of tears.
We've had our ups an' downs in life like everybody's had;
We've had a big share of the *good*, with something of the *bad*.

We've pulled together in the work, each doin' of our best
Until we've got enough ahead we can afford to rest.
We needn't fear the poorhouse now, nor that we'll die in debt;—
The old farm will support us both, so we've no cause to fret.

But, Sary, I have l'arned some things in this long life of mine;
I've l'arned it never pays to fret nor growl nor snarl nor whine.
If things don't seem to move along just as we'd like them to,
The best way is to pitch right in an' push or drag them through.

A. C. Amidon.

"The old farm will support us now."

FARMER JOHN'S PHILOSOPHY.

It never pays when trouble comes, to give up in despair,
An' think our burden is too great for mortal frame to bear.
The best way is to stand up straight an' never swerve a hair;
The trouble won't seem half so great if we but meet it square.

Some folks are always worryin' 'bout something that's to come.
If they haint any trouble, they're *expectin'* to have some.
If they'd just spend their moments in enjoyin' what they've got,
They'd get on better through the world, an' have a happier lot.

Dark clouds may loom above us an' the thunder bolts may crash,
An' ev'rything seem goin' to end in eternal smash;
But right above the threatenin' clouds, though we can't see his light,
The sun, in all his splendor, is a shinin' calm an' bright.

The man who tries his level best to do what good he can
To make his neighbors happier, by helpin' ev'ry man,

Is buildin' up a monument more lastin' than the stone,
To keep his name in memory when he is dead an' gone.

The longest life is much too short to waste a single day,
An' moments are too precious to be lost or thrown away;
Each day should be the record of some good that we have done,
Some kind word spoken, or some act that's helped a needy one.

Kind words don't cost us anything, but yet their worth is great;
They've helped to save a fallen one, an' stopped a fearful fate;
They've never made an enemy, nor caused a tear to flow,
But often have they helped to cheer a heart bowed down with woe.

Harsh words have never made a friend nor wiped away a tear;
They never bring us any good, but sometimes cost us dear.
The cord of love that binds two hearts together may be broken,
An' two lives be asunder cast by one word harshly spoken

FARMER JOHN'S PHILOSOPHY.

There's much of sorrow in this world might just as
well be joy
If we, instead of grumblin', would our precious
time employ
In bein' thankful that our woes an' troubles aint
no worse,
An' make that thing a blessin' that at first appeared
a curse.

The selfish man don't never know the happiness
he might,
If he would just consider that some *other may* be
right,
An' give his neighbors credit for a little common
sense;
The practice of unselfish acts would more than pay
expense.

This talkin' 'bout our neighbors an' condemin' of
their acts
When all we know is *guess-work*, an' nothin' of
the *facts*,
Is just about the *meanest* thing that we can find to
do;
It makes a pile of trouble, an' makes *us* feel
sneakin' too.

If we can't say a word of good about some one we
know,
We'd better keep our mouths tight shut an' leave
the matter so.

FARMER JOHN'S PHILOSOPHY.

I b'lieve *that* man has never lived who hadn't *one*
good trait,
Which, if we only knew the fact, we would appre-
ciate.

I b'lieve, when God created us, it was His right-
eous plan
We should enjoy what's given us the very best we
can;
An' while we thus are happy, we must keep *this*
thing in view,
To do our very best to make our neighbors happy
too.

AUNT KEZIAH ENTERTAINS THE NEW PREACHER.

GOOD mornin', Elder! How 'de do? I'm
r'aley glad you've come.
Walk in an' take the rockin'-cheer an' make yer-
self to hum.
I s'pose you're gettin' pooty well acquainted in
this place,
An' find there's lots of people here that need a
work of grace.

"I've been expectin' you'd drop in—been lookin'
more'n a week;
I heerd ye preach last Sunday, an' I like the way
ye speak.
It done me good to hear ye talk 'bout fashions an'
pretense;—
I think that preachin' such as *that,* is good,
straight, common sense.

"You'll find there's lots of people here aint what
they ort to be;
There's some that hold their heads so high they'll
hardly look at *me*;

But then, of course, I feel myself about as good as they;
If they'll compare *their* acts with *mine,* I'll do it any day.

"I don't believe in talkin' 'bout my neighbors, bad or good,
But I could tell considerable about them if I would.
They're jest about the *meanest* lot that you have ever see,
Except a few; I hope you'll find that 'mong that few is *me.*

"I hear your poor, dear wife is dead; I know ye feel the loss, —
An' two small children on yer hands, it must be quite a cross.
I know jest how to sympathize; *I* am a widder, too,
An' when I feel *my* loneliness, I know how 'tis with *you.*

"I know perhaps it aint my place to give ye much advice,
But we have got some women here who think they're *awful nice,*—
A few old maids—you'll find 'em out—who're dyin' for a man,
With half a dozen widders, too, who'll catch you if they can.

"I'd hate to see your little ones misused by some I know;—
'Twould almost break my very heart if it should turn out so.
I s'pose of course you'll marry; it's but nat'ral that ye should;
Them children want a mother's care,—some one that's kind an' good.

"Last Sunday when I sat in church, I seen 'em sittin' there,
An' thinks I to myself, how much they need a mother's care!
I couldn't keep my feelin's back; I felt the tear-drops start;
I wanted so to take 'em up an' clasp em' to my heart.

"I always thought that I was meant to be a preacher's wife;—
That helpin' on the gospel work was jest my sphere in life,
An' trainin' children's youthful minds an' leadin' 'em aright
So that they'd grow up good an' smart, would jest be my delight.

"I've often said I'd never wed since Ebenezer died,
Though I might had a dozen men or more if I had tried;

But then I've knowed the best of folks to sometimes change their mind,
An' I might do the same, perhaps, if some good cause I'd find.

"But, Elder, please don't say a word 'bout what we've talked to-day;
If certain folks should find it out, they'd have a lot to say.
There's some folks always watchin' 'round to see how others walk,
An' pick up everything they can find out to make a talk.

What, Elder, must ye go so soon? I r'aley wish ye'd stay;
We've got acquainted now, I wish ye'd drop in ev'ry day,
An' bring the children up sometimes; of course 'twill be all right,
An' you can stop an' get 'em here when you go home at night.

"I feel so for them little ones; they need a mother's care,
An', Elder, you need some one too your joys an' griefs to share;
I know of *one* would fill the place, but 'taint for me to say.
What, Elder! Must ye go so soon? Well, come again. Good-day."

CHRISTMAS EVE AT FARMER JOHN'S.

WELL, Sary, to-morrow is Christmas; the children are all tucked in bed
An' sleepin like sweet little angels. God's blessin' on each curly head.
I s'pose they are dreamin' of presents old Santa Claus mebbe will bring;
I see they've all hung up their stockin's as if they expected something.

I wish we'd a big pile of money, we'd buy something nice for the boys,
Would please them a monstrous sight better than cheap little candies an' toys;
An' we'd buy for our sweet little Jennie, the girl that looks so much like you,—
An' organ,—perhaps a pianner; 'twould be nice, an' I think please her too.

But we're farmers, an' money aint plenty; we haint even *pennies* to spare,
But the children, the dear little creatures, shall each of them have their full share.

To-day when I went to the village, I seen such a lot that was nice,—
The stores were chuck full of presents you could buy at almost any price.

My old head began to get bothered a thinkin' of what I should git
To be useful an' nice for the children; but the store-keeper he settled it;
So I told him to pick out the presents, such things as he thought would be good,
Not git up too steep on the prices, an' I'd pay the bill if I could.

So he picked out a nice suit of clothin' to give to each one of the boys,
An' he said that how bein' 'twas Christmas, he'd throw in a couple of toys.
Then he picked out a dress for our Jennie, the nicest he had in the store,
I got it for just what it cost him; he said that he wanted no more.
Then he throwed in a doll too, for Jennie; he said 'twas *his* present for her,—
All dressed up in silk an' in satin with a cloak of the finest of fur.

An' then, when the bill was all settled, it took ev'ry cent that I had,
So I couldn't buy *you* any present; but I knew that you wouldn't feel bad,

For both of us love our dear children; we'll do all
for them that we can,
So when *we* grow old an' dependent they'll act on
the same generous plan.

Now, Sary, we'll fill up the stockin's; the dear,
little things are so small,
We'll have to put some on the table, for they won't
begin to hold all;
An' when they git up in the mornin' I guess they
will meet a surprise!
I think I can see the joy dancin' an' sparklin' in
their eager eyes.

'Twill pay us for all that it cost us, to see just how
happy they'll be,
An' hear them a shoutin' an' laughin' an' jumpin' in
innocent glee.
'Taint much we can do for our offspring 'cept gittin'
'em something to eat
An' findin' them comfortable clothin', though' taint
very stylish an' neat.

But we think just as much of 'em, Sary, as if we
had thousands in gold
An' diamonds, an' jewelry an' finery much more
than our cottage could hold.
Now we've got ev'rything fixed up nicely, I guess
we'll be gittin' to bed;
My old eyes begin to feel drowsy; I'm such a con-
sarned sleepy-head.

An' we'll pray that the dear little children God
sent us to brighten our home,
May live to take care of *us*, Sary, when the time
of our old age shall come.
Then we an' they'll have to change places; *we'll*
be the dependent ones *then*,
When Jennie shall grow to a woman an' our
boys shall be grown to be men.

FARMER JOHN DETERMINES TO HAVE A LAWSUIT.

MORNIN', Mr. Lawyer! No, thankee, can't sit down;
I thought I'd call an' see ye to-day, as I'm in town.
I've got a leetle business that is suthin' new to me:—
Got into a jangle with another man, ye see.

"I don't believe in lawin' not as a gineral thing;
I'm nigh on seventy-five year old; I'll be that in the spring,
An' never had a lawsuit yet; but now it's got to be.
I'm bound to have my rights, I am; no man can tread on me.

"What is't about! Well, wait a bit; I'll tell ye all the truth:
Tom Jackson is my brother-in-law,—married my sister Ruth,
An' when my good old father died 'bout forty years ago,
He left the farm an' all he had to me an' Ruth, ye know.

"Then children came around."

A. C. Amidon.

"I lived to hum when father died, an' run the farm alone,
An' Ruth an' Tom lived near us in a cottage of their own;
But when they found the farm was willed even 'twixt Ruth an' me,
They sold their house an' moved with us, all in one family.

"It went on pooty well at first; then children came around,
Until at length the house was gittin' 'most to small, we found;
Then we divided up the farm; 'twas big enough for two,
An' I kept the old buildin's, while Tom he built up new.

"We got a smart surveyor chap, made a dividin' line
So Tom would know which part was his an' I'd know which was mine.
We built the fence right on the line jest where it ort to be,
An' ev'rything was settled right to suit both Tom an' me.

"We lived along as pleasant as two neighbors ever could,
An' each one tried his very best to do the other good.

Ruth used to come to our house, help Sary do her work,
An' Sary'd do the same for her; for Sary aint no shirk.

"It went on so for twenty years, till one day last July,
My cattle broke the line fence down an' got in Thomas's rye;
I s'pose they did destroy it some,—I know it was too bad,
An' when Tom found it out of course it made him tearin' mad.

"He came straight up to our house, he did, that very night,
An' called me the wust names he could, an' said I dassent fight;
Then I got mad an' swore at Tom an' told him that he lied,
An' Sary tried to make me hush an' couldn't, so she cried.

"It wasn't but a week or so 'fore Tom's whole flock o' sheep
Broke over in my buckwheat patch while I was fast asleep;
They et it off an' trod it in till they'd destroyed it all,
So the whole crop wa'n't worth as much as stubble, in the fall.

"Of course I went straight down to Tom's, an' then we had a row,
An' Tom haint spoke a pleasant word to me from then till now,
An' Ruth don't come to our house to help us as before,
An' I have ordered Sary that she shan't go *there* no more.

"So matters have been goin' on like this, from bad to worse,
An' ev'ry time we meet we only quarrel, swear an' curse.
Tom says he'll shoot my cows next time they break into his lot,
An' if he does, I'll shoot his sheep an' him too, like as not.

"He's turned the stream that used to give me water for my stock,
So now my hillside pastur' is as dry as any rock.
He's cut down hemlocks in the woods, that stood right on the line;
He *knows* that they aint his'n any more than they are mine.

"He tries to hurt me all he can in ev'ry kind of way.
He's killed 'most all the hens I had, an' not a cent he'll pay.

He said they dug up all his corn an' sp'iled his
garden too;
He knows it's all a blasted lie, an' not a word is
true!

"Of *course* I'll sue. That's what I come to talk to
ye about!
I'll slap the papers onto him if you'll just make
'em out!
I'll make him jest the sorriest man that you have
ever see!
He waked up the wrong passenger when he pitched
into me!

"I'll sarve the papers on him sure, this very after-
noon!
Since Tom an' I have got to fight, it can't begin
too soon!
An' when he once gits through with me he'll be a
poorer man!
I'll make his family beggars, sir! I'll do it if I
can!

"Well, now you've got the papers fixed, I guess
I'll say good-day;
I'll go an' get my team an' be a joggin' on my
way.
I can't help laughin' when I think how Tom will
cuss an' swear;
'Twill be worth more than any show! I wish ye
could be there.

"But yet I kinder pity him; an' then, to tell the truth,
I can't help feelin' sorry for my poor, old sister Ruth.
But dang it! They had orter thought before they pitched on me;
They've waked up the wrong passenger, an' that's jest what they'll see!"

FARMER JOHN'S LAWSUIT IS SETTLED.

GOOD mornin', Mr. Lawyer; well, here I am
ag'in.
I happened here in town to-day, an' thought I'd
jest drop in.
I brought yer papers back to ye; don't need 'em
now, ye see,
For ev'rything is settled up 'twixt brother Tom an'
me.

"Last night when I went hum from here an' druv
up to the door,
I seen a sight I hadn't seen in many years before!
There sat Tom an' sister Ruth a talkin' to my
wife,
An' lookin' jest as happy 'sif there wasn't any
strife!

"You bet it did surprise me some. I hardly dared
go in.
I thought about these papers here an' felt as mean
as sin
To think of what I'd been about an' Tom not
knowin' it!
I tell ye 'twan't no easy job, an' rather tried my
grit.

"But Tom he met me at the door an' says, 'How
are ye, John?
An' Ruth an' Sary stood close by a lookin' smilin'
on.
I looked at Tom an' then at Ruth an' kinder
stammered some,
An' said, 'I'm glad to see ye both. I'm r'aley glad
you've come.'

"An' then we got to talkin' as we used to years
ago,
An' laughin' 'bout the scrapes we had when we
were boys, ye know;
An' Ruth an' Sary both sot there as happy's they
could be,
Both busy with their knittin' work an' watchin'
Tom an' me.

"'Bimeby Tom turns an' says to me, 'I thought I'd
come to-night
An' pay ye for them hens I shot, an' try to make
things right.
I know I haint done as I ought, haint acted like a
man,
But if you'll tell me what is right, I pay ye if I
can.

" 'We haint lived as two brothers should for many
a long, sad year.
The troubles we have had has cost poor Ruth
there, many a tear;

We're both a gittin' 'long in years,—haint many more of life,
An' them, I think, we'd ruther spend in friendship than in strife.'

"I couldn't help but think about the paper that I'd got,
An' wish I'd never had it drawed; for, sir, I tell ye what!
It made me feel as mean as dirt—a good deal meaner too,
But helped me to make up my mind jest what I'd orter do.

"I said to Tom: 'We've both been fools for many a sorry year,
I didn't see it so before, but now I see it clear.
You talk 'bout payin' for them hens. Guess *I* am in *your* debt.
That rye of yourn my cows destroyed,—*that* haint been settled yet.'

"An' then we argyed quite a spell,—Tom claimin' *he* owed *me*,
While *I* claimed *I* was owin' *him* as near as *I* could see;
An' neither one would take a cent from t'other one, of course,
An' so we kept a talkin' on till both of us was hoarse.

"Then Ruth an' Sary both spoke up an' said:
'Leave it to us,
We'll settle all this matter up so there won't be no fuss;
Both promise you'll be fools no more, an' that will make it square!'
Tom looked at me an' I at him an 'greed *that* would be fair.

"We both shook hands an' both agreed that we'd be fools no more,
But both live as we used to do in happy years before;
An' so I've brought the papers back. Just burn 'em if ye will,
An' tell me what I owe ye, sir," an' I will pay the bill.

"What! Aint no bill? Well, that is strange! I'd r'aley like to pay,
But if ye won't take anything, a week from jest this day
Is Christmas, an' if you'll come up an' see me on the farm,
We'll give you one good dinner that will make yer heart grow warm.

"Be sure an' bring yer wife along so she can have a share;
An' you'll meet Tom an' sister Ruth, for they will both be there.

We're common, but we'll treat ye both the very best we can,
An' you'll find Tom a grand old chap; there aint no better man."

THE LAST PAYMENT IS MADE.

WELL, Sary, the mortgage is cancelled. The old farm is now all our own.
I made the last payment this mornin' an' settled with old Squire Stone.
He said that he'd ruther not take it, he'd ruther 'twould run a year more,
He'd ruther I'd just pay the int'rest, an' let the claim stand as before.

"He thought that I didn't remember how 'twas but a few years ago,—
That year when the frost killed our corn crop an' our wheat was choked out by the snow;
He thought that I didn't remember he wanted to close on us then
An' get the old farm in his clutches; he'd like to have that chance again.

"We've worked many long years together to git the old farm out of debt;
Sometimes we'd git almost discouraged, an' then we'd worry an' fret;
Sometimes ev'rything seemed ag'in us,—crops killed by the wind or the hail,
An' neighbors would shake their heads sadly an' say that we surely must fail.

"I'll never forget that bright mornin' I brought
you out here as my wife;—
'Twas jest the day after our weddin,—the happiest
day of my life.
We stood in the door both together, an' looked
around over the farm,
An' life seemed so bright in the future;—we thought
'twould be always a charm.

"We didn't care much for the mortgage;—that
didn't give us any fears;
We thought we could h'ist off that burden in just
about four or five years.
Ev'rything looked so rosy before us,—life seemed
to have only one side,
An' that was all brightness an' sunshine, no shadow
of trouble could hide.

"But years kept a comin' an' goin', an' though we
worked hard ev'ry day,
We found with our scrimpin' an' savin' 'twas little
enough we could pay
When the time came around for the payment; yet
every dollar helped some,
But often we felt kind of trembly when the day for
the payment should come.

"We never were anxious for riches—for piles of
the glitterin' gold,
The most that we wanted was somethin' laid by
when we got to be old;

An' we wanted to leave for our children, the farm
free an' clear from all debt;
An', Sary, the thing is accomplished, though we
won't give it up to 'em yet.

"The cows an' the pigs an' the chickens, they seem
to rejoice with us too;—
The meadows look greener an' fresher, the flowers
look gayer in hue;—
The brook runnin' down from the hillside seems
singin' a silvery charm,
An' ev'rything seems to be shoutin', '*The mortgage
is off of the farm*!'

"Yes, Sary, the mortgage is cancelled; we haint
that no longer to fear.
The old farm with ev'rything on it is now all our
own, free an' clear.
Our trouble an' frettin' is over; no creditor can us
alarm,
For we've paid the last cent on the mortgage an'
wiped it clean off of the farm."

THE SURPRISE PARTY AT BROTHER ABNER BLY'S.

JOSIAH GROTH dropped in one day, 'twas gettin' 'long to'rds night,—
Says he, "My wife instructed me to give ye a invite
To go with us on a drop-in to Brother Abner Bly's;
We thought we'd go this evenin' an' give 'em a surprise.

"There's lots of folks a goin'; Deacon Jones will take his sleigh
An' stop at ev'ry house an' pick up all along the way.
Ye needn't git no supper, for we'll eat when we git there,
But bring some victuals 'long with you. Each one will fetch their share."

Sary, she flew 'round like a girl. She always acts just so.
She was crazy for the party, but *I* didn't want to go;
But 'twa'n't no use for *me* to talk; when Sary says *her* say,
I always have to fall right in. There aint no other way.

An' so we hustled 'round an' got some biscuit, cake
an' pie,
An' got our things on ready for the sleigh when it
came by;
An' pooty soon we heerd it come a stoppin' by the
door,
An' when Sary'n me were both crammed in, there
wasn't room for more.

The Deacon druv, an' on we flew, a jolly-hearted
load,—
Dodgin' the snowballs from the hoofs as on we
swiftly rode,
Till pooty quick, beside the road, loomed up before
our eyes,
The house of Abner Bly who we were goin' to
surprise.

The house was all closed up an' dark,—the winder
blinds shut tight,
Exceptin' in one bedroom we could see a flickerin'
light.
The doctor's horse was standin' there, tied fast
beside the gate
An' pawin' in the snow as if he didn't like to
wait.

The Deacon's wife says, "Laws!" says she, "I
wonder 'f some one's sick!
They all was well the last I heerd. They must
have been took quick!"

The rest of us put in our say, declarin' 'twan't just right
For Abner's folks to happen sick on that partic'lar night.

We thought perhaps the doctor'd druv ahead to let 'em know
That visitors was comin' for a grand surprise, an' so
We ranged ourselves up in a line a reachin' from the door
Way back into the snowbanks, a couple rods or more.

Then some one rapped upon the door;—but all was still within.
They waited 'bout a minute, an' then they rapped ag'in;
An' then the door was opened after a little fuss,
An' the neighborhood nurse-woman stood starin' out at us.

We started to rush in, but with a warnin' "sh!" she raised
Her hands as if to push us back! Of course we were amazed.
Then some one asked her what on airth the matter seemed to be;—
"The doctor says a pair of twins. A boy an' girl," says she.

A meaner feelin' crowd than us I b'lieve could not be found!
We felt as if we'd like to sink right there into the ground!
We turned away without a word an' sneaked off to the sleigh,
An' silently crawled in an' started back upon our way.

I said without a single word,—I made an error there,
For one old maid with freckled face an' scarlet colored hair,
Declared 'twas mean as anything could be below the skies;—
They'd brought this thing about just now, to break up the surprise.

We didn't all agree with her in what she had to say,
But no one felt like speakin' so we let her have her way.
We all were mad as mad could be, an' loaded down with shame,
An' each one tried to think the others were the most to blame.

The Deacon druv like sixty over the drifted snow,
An' where the drifts were deepest, the rapidest he'd go,

The Deacon's wife an' Sary'n I, all sat there on one seat
A holdin' on an' bracin' hard with both our hands an' feet.

The Deacon's wife sot next to me, an' sure's my name is John,
I had to grab both arms around her waist to keep me on!
I knew 'twa'n't just the thing for such a moral man like me,
But then there wa'n't no other way as near as I could see.

The Deacon's wife she squirmed an' scowled, but knowin' how it wuz,
She put up with unpleasant things as all good people does;
But I was glad that Sary didn't turn her eyes that way,
For if she had, well! well! well! well! there'd something been to pay.

Bimeby we struck into a drift; — 'twas sidelin' as a tent;
One runner slid up on the bank, an' overboard we went!
I sot upon the lower side an' went out first, ye see,
An' Sary an' the Deacon's wife both fell on top of me!

Sary she weighs two hundred pounds, the Deacon's wife still more,

An' when they struck me, sure I thought I'd gone
to t'other shore!
They cracked a dozen of my ribs an' squashed me
all out flat,
Till I felt as thin's a pancake or thinner yet than
that.

They dragged me out from under 'em an' thought
that I was dead,
An' Sary stopped her scoldin' then, an' some few
tears she shed;
But after rubbin' me a while an' hurtin' me still
more,
They found that I was breathin' still, though pooty
nigh death's door.

They got me hum an' into bed, a sorry-lookin'
sight;—
The Deacon's wife an' Sary sot up with me through
the night;
An' while I lay there sufferin' (I seem to feel it
now),
I settled *one* thing in my mind an' registered this
vow:

As long as Heaven lets me live an' lets me keep my
mind,
I'll take no stock in parties of the surprisin' kind.
I s'pose I'll be a cripple now all through my nat'ral
life,
Because of that dummed party, Sary an' the
Deacon's wife.

THE SURPRISE PARTY AT FARMER JOHN'S.

'TWAS just about a month or so succeedin' the surprise
That sent us all a sneakin' hum ashamed, from Abner Bly's;
I was jest a gittin' better from the hurts that I had got
From Sary an' the Deacon's wife, the time that we upsot.

Sary, she'd took a heavy cold a dyein' stockin' yarn
An doin' chores an' lookin' after things around the barn,
An' so she thought that evenin' she would take a couple pills
An' soak her feet an' dose herself, an thus save doctors' bills.

She sot there by the washtub, a lookin' 'most half dead,—
Her feet stuck in hot water an' a bandage 'round her head,
While I stood by the stove, undressed, stripped right down to the skin,
A rubbin' liniment on my back an' dryin' of it in—

When all at once there came a rap a soundin' on the door,
An', in a second, in there rushed some forty folks or more,
Of men an' women, boys an' girls of ev'ry age an' size,—
Our neighbors, ev'ry one, had come to give us a surprise!

The Deacon's wife was leadin', an' a foot behind her there
Came that freckle-visaged spinster with the crimson colored hair!
I couldn't reach my clothin' but I jumped behind the door,
An' Sary looked as if she'd faint an' drop right on the floor.

The Deacon's wife stopped sudden an' looked 'most scared to death,
While sev'ral more throwed up their hands an' gasped an' caught for breath,
Except the red-haired spinster, she was lookin' grinnin' on,
An' in a squeakin' voice she said, "I wonder where is John!"

I stood behind the door, of course, a tremblin' in affright,
An' knowin' I wa'n't fit, just then, to stand out square in sight,

An' hopin' they would see just how things were,
an' wouldn't stay,
An' make some short apology, an' then go right
away.

But that confounded spinster with her freckle-
spotted face,
Seemed bound to find where I was hid before she
left the place;
An' so she peeked behind the stove an' underneath
the bed;—
She'd find where John was hid away before she
quit, she said.

I didn't say a word, of course, but in a minute
more,
I seen her freckled visage come a peekin' 'round
the door;
An' then she looked me over with a witherin',
virtuous stare,
An' said, "You make a pooty sight! I r'aley must
declare!"

I tried to hide my undressed self the very best I
could,
An' git her lookin' somewhere else. It didn't do
no good;
An' then at length my anger riz. I didn't talk
polite,
But I will bet her big ears burned at what I said
that night.

Says I, "You freckle-faced, red-haired insult to
woman's race!
You lantern-jawed hyena, you ill-favored, foul
disgrace!
You female imp of Satan, fresh from sheol's hottest
spot!
You disfigured smirch on nature, you creation's
foulest blot!

"You dirty, pryin', meddlin' thing, you brazen-pated
fool!
You homely, gaunt, ungainly, long-eared pattern
of a mule!
You idiotic lunatic, you worst of all that's mean!
You loathsomest lump of hatefulness that mortal
ever seen!

"You leave my house this minute! Never enter it
ag'in,
You disgrace to all that's human, you embodiment
of sin!"
I might have kept on talkin' and said a good deal
more,
But she suddenly retreated and rushed out through
the door.

The rest of 'em apologized,—were sorry that 'twas
so,
But said if they w'an't welcome, we had ought to
let 'em know.

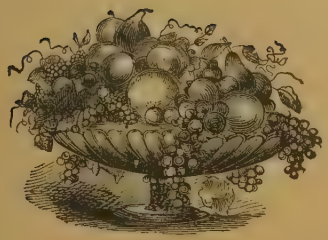
Of course we had to say we s'posed their comin' was well meant,
An' wishin' us a short good-night, they picked up their things an' went.

Before they went, however, they managed to upset
The washtub of hot water, an' got the floor all wet;
They broke a lamp, a chair or two, an' cracked a winder light,
An' wrenched the kitchen door so that we couldn't shut it tight.

An' then, as if they thought they ought to do a little more,
They turned the table upside down, an' broke the pantry door,
An' locked the cat up in the chest,—we found her there next day;
I s'pose they thought 'twas awful smart a carryin' on that way.

They left the house all upside down—a reg'lar mixed-up muss.
If a cyclone had a struck it, it couldn't been much wuss.
I s'pose they meant it all in sport, but *I* don't like such fun,
An' then they didn't get our thanks for anything they'd done.

Sary, she sot right down an' cried, she felt so dreffful bad;
I didn't feel like cryin' but I felt supremely mad;—
An' when, that night, we went to bed, before we shut our eyes,
We prayed, "O Lord, don't send on us another such surprise!"



FARMER JOHN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE DONATION.

WELL, John, did you like the donation?
Did the minister like what he got?
I s'pose it was nice an' worth seein',
An' I s'pose they brought him a lot.
I knew that last night you was tired
An' sleepy with bein' up late,
An' I knew you would tell me this mornin',
An' so I concluded to wait.

"Now, John, while I'm gettin' the breakfast
An' you helpin' the children to dress,
You can tell me about the donation;—
I can hear while I'm workin', I guess.
Did ev'ry one seem to enjoy it?
Was the supper got up nice an' good?
Did they laugh at the big cake I sent them?
Did it taste right? I thought that it would."

"Yes, Sary, the supper was splendid,
An' ev'ry one bragged of your cake;
I wish you had been there to hear them!
I declare, I felt proud for your sake.
I et till I couldn't eat longer;—
The victuals were plenty an' nice,
An' the cakes were so good that I brought you
An' each of the children a slice.

"The minister seemed to be happy
An' pleased with whatever they brought;
But I couldn' help thinkin' some rich ones
Didn't bring quite as much as they ought.
Squire Brown brought a few heads of cabbage,—
I think half a dozen or so,
An' his wife an' himself an' his fam'ly
Were the first ones to supper to go.

"Farmer Smith brought a bag of dried apples,
An' a dozen balls of Dutch cheese,
An' his wife brought a box of nice honey,
For you know that they keep lots of bees.
Mrs. Jones brought a yellow chair-tidy
To give to the minister's wife,
With a green and red dog worked upon it,
That looked 'most as nat'ral as life.

"Jim Brown gave the minister's daughter
A monstrous, nice, great, big boquet;
They're goin' to be married this winter,
So I heerd some people there say.
Well, Jim is a pretty good feller,
An' smart as most boys in this town;
An' the minister's girl can't do better
Than to marry that very Jim Brown.

"Colonel Pompous was there with his daughters,
One each side hangin' onto his arm;
An' their breastpins an' earrings an' dresses
Must have cost as much as a farm.

They didn't stay to get any supper,
  But went off in an hour or so,
An' they handed the preacher some money,
  How much it was, I don't know.

"Old Lager, who keeps the brick tavern,
  Was there with his children an' wife;
I guess that they entered the church door
  Last night, for the first in their life.
The miller came too, with his fam'ly,
  An' he seemed glad to see all the folks;
He kept the whole crowd there a laughin',
  By gettin' off some of his jokes.

"I can't say I like these donations;—
  They seem most too much like a show;
If t'wasn't for fun an' for visitin',
  I don't think that many would go.
But then, if they'd give what was needed
  To help the poor preacher along,—
Wood, clothin', provisions an' such things,
  I don't think 'twould be quite so wrong.

"They bring lots of things that ain't useful,
  Like door-mats an' tidies an' such;
Such things appear nice in the parlor,
  But they don't help the poor preacher much.
I thought if them people had brought him
  Some five or six cords of good wood,
'Twould have made him a good deal more happy,
  An' done the poor fellow more good.

FARMER JOHN DESCRIBES THE DONATION.

"One thing happened durin' the evenin'
That brought tears to many an eye:
Old Widow DeLong, don't you know her,
Who lives in the hut near old Bly?
She came hobblin' up to the preacher
With the help of her crutch an' her cane;
Each step that she walked, I am certain
It gave her the greatest of pain.

"She handed the preacher a bundle,
An' asked that he would it receive;
She said that she wished it was better
But 'twas all she was able to give.
The minister pleasantly thanked her,
Then open the paper he tore,
When out came a pair of nice stockings
An' fell down onto the floor.

"They were knit of the nicest of woolen,
As thick an' as warm as a board,
An' I couldn't but think the poor widow
Had given all she could afford.
The minister picked up the stockings,
An' a tear started into his eye;—
As he took the thin hand of the widow,
I thought he was going to cry.

"He blessed her for what she had given
An' told her her gift was not small;—
That, like her we read of in the bible,
Her gift was the greatest of all;

For you know that the Savior addressed her
Words that made the Pharisees mad.
He said she gave more than the others,
For she'd given quite all that she had.

"An' the Widow DeLong she was cryin'
An' wipin' the tears from her cheeks
An' holdin' the hand of the preacher
While she told of the long, weary weeks
When her last, darlin' boy lay a dyin',
An' the minister stood by her side
An' spoke words of goodness an' comfort,
An' closed his dear eyes when he died.

"She said that she wanted to give him
Something nice for the good he had done;
So she knit him a pair of warm stockings
From the yarn that her Willie had spun.
I noticed her hands how they trembled,
An' how long by the fire she stood;—
An' then someone nudged me an' whispered
The widow was all out of wood.

"Then some of us talked it all over
An' made up we'd give her a lift
An' draw her a pile of good firewood,
An' make *her* a donation gift.
I promised I'd come in the mornin'
An' bring up a load from this way;
So the boys, when they've eaten their breakfast,
Can load up the big, two-horse sleigh.

FARMER JOHN DESCRIBES THE DONATION.

"An' we'll give her a jolly donation
That will warm up her lonely, old heart;
An', Sary, you fix up some good things
To take when we're ready to start;—
Some pie an' some bread an' some taters,
An' put in a nice piece of meat,
An' anything else you can think of
That she would be likely to eat.

"An' I guess you had better go with us,—
I think she'd be glad it you would;
An' we'll give her a rousing donation
That will do the poor creature gome good.
To be sure, we have nothing to squander,
An' we've worked hard for what we have got;
But I don't think we'll ever be poorer
For givin' to them who have not."

FARMER JOHN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE FAIR.

NOW, John, will ye just hold the baby
While I'm clearin the supper away?
An' we'll have a good set-down together,
For I s'pose that you've got lots to say
Of the heaps of nice things you've been seein'
This afternoon, down to the fair;
An' hadn't it been for the baby,
I'll bet you I'd like to been there!

"Did any one notice my door-mat
I've been workin' for more than a year?
I'd feel bad if I thought it wa'n't noticed.
Did they say much? Or didn't ye hear?
Was it nice as the one that Jane Ann made
Out of zephyr an' shetland an' sich?
Though mine was made out of old flannel,
I thought that the colors looked rich."

"Well, Sary, they spread out your door-mat
On some boards by the side of the rest;
There were lots of 'em there that was splendid,
But of course I thought yours looked the best.
Jane Ann's was a little more fancy,—
Had a picture worked on, of a cat;
But it wasn't nowheres so substantial,—
Looked more like a shawl than a mat.

FARMER JOHN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE FAIR.

"But I didn't look much at them fineries,
For ye know I haint got much taste
For things that don't seem to be useful;
It seems most too much like a waste
Of time to be workin' at such things
That aint fit to eat nor to wear;
But you women folks like to be workin'
At things about which men don't care.

"I like to see farmin' utensils
Like wagons an' harrows an' plows
An' good labor-savin' machinery,
An' horses an' oxen an' cows.
I looked at such things pooty closely,—
There was lots of them there to be seen;
An' some things I don't know the names of;
I'd asked, but they'd thought I was green.

'There were piles of big beets an' potaters,
An' radishes long as my arm;
An' the corn an' the punkins they showed there
Must have growed on some very rich farm.
There were cornstalks as long as a bean-pole,—
I'd think they were ten feet or more;
An' cucumbers, well, oh my gracious!
I never seen such things before.

"The cows I don't think were such wonders;
They didn't suit *me*, not a bit.
When they come to beat our old Brindle,
They've got to just get up an' git!

They showed up some pooty fine horses,
  An' I think they trotted quite smart;
But I got sick of their scorin' an' botherin'
  Before they got ready to start.

"Did they show any flowers? I *guess* so!
  The nicest ones ever I've seen;
I'd liked to pick off some an' brought you,
  If I'd thought that it wouldn't look mean.
There were pansies an' dahlias an asters
  An' hundreds I never can name.
We'll try in our garden next summer
  An' see if *we* can't raise the same.

"They'd the nicest machines there for washin'
  An' savin' the women-folks work;
I thought *you'd* like one of 'em, Sary,
  Though I know you're no woman to shirk.
So I bought one an' paid down the money;
  They'll bring it to-morrow by night;
I know pooty well that you'll like it,
  'Twill make your big washin's so light.

"Such big crowds of people together,
  I never have seen in my life.
It seemed that each man in the county
  Was there an' had brought 'long his wife.
There were boys with their whiskers just startin',
  With their girls hangin' onto their arm,
Chewin' peanuts an' crackers an' candies,
  First they'd ever been off of the farm.

FARMER JOHN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE FAIR.

"Some drunken ones staggerin' an' swearin',
  Scarin' women an' children to death;—
Pollutin' the fresh air of heaven
  With their whisky an' beer tainted breath.
I think that such miserable wretches
  Ought never to go to a fair.
They're a curse to themselves an' their fam'lies
  An' ev'ry one else that is there.

"There's much that is good in such gatherin's,
  An' a good deal that isn't just right;—
There's a big chance, I think, for improvement;—
  I've been thinkin' it over to-night.
I s'pose that the judges are honest,
  An' the premiums went where they should;
But r'aley, I think that some poor things
  Fared better than those that were good."

FARMER JOHN COMPARES THE OLD WITH THE NEW IN EDUCATION.

I TELL you, Sary, times have changed since you an' I were young;
There's lots of new things, good an' bad, have into bein' sprung,
An' l'arnin' aint the thing it was 'bout fifty year ago,
An' schools aint what they used to be, not by a lengthy show.

Long years ago when I was young, I went to deestrict school
Down in the old log schoolhouse, where the master used to rule
With will an' hand of iron, an' voice as strong an' loud
As thunder peals that crashin' come from out the threatenin' cloud.

I think I see the master yet as oft I've seen him stand,—
A frown upon his scowlin' face, a cudgel in his hand,—
The scholars in a shiverin' fear an' tremblin', big an' small,
Not knowin' on whose luckless back the master's blows would fall.

Long years ago when I was young, I went to deestrict school

Down in the old log schoolhouse, where the master used to rule.

He pounded l'arnin' in our heads by boxin' of our ears,
An' salted ev'ry lesson down with our own briny tears;
He gave us marks upon our backs that lasted days an' weeks
After the tear-drops brought by pain had dried upon our cheeks.

He boarded all the deestrict 'round, a week in ev'ry place,
But didn't find in ev'ry home a pleasant, smilin' face.
He used to hang around the girls an' silly nonsense talk
Until they'd wish he'd turn his back an' show how he could walk.

We l'arned our letters one by one, an' then commenced to spell,
Till "Webster's Elementary" we thought we knew quite well;
And then the "English Reader" came, an' when we once could read
What Pope an' Dryden wrote, we thought that we were smart indeed.

We tugged at "Darboll" weeks an' weeks an' l'arned by rote each rule,
An' each one tried to be the best at cypherin' in the school;

An' when at length we got as far as "Double Rule of Three,"
We thought we'd reached the highest limb of Mathematics' tree.

You'd hardly see a grammar then in any deestrict school;
We thought that studies such as that would make a boy a fool;
We couldn't see no sense in it; this parsin' verbs an' nouns
Seemed just about as silly as the talk of circus clowns.

An' algebra, we thought of course no one but merchants use
For markin' sly the price of goods so that they wouldn't lose.
Geometry! Well, I declare! Don't think I ever heard
In all the days I went to school, not even such a word.

But, Sary, things have changed so much between that time an' now,
It almost turns my old brain 'round! I feel, I don't know how.
I used to think I know'd some things 'bout 'rithmetic an' such,
But now I find that what I know don't all amount to much.

Why, Sary, *children* know more now than *big folks*
used to then!
Our little boys that go to school can talk as big
as men,
An' tell us lots about the stars a shinin' in the
sky,
That they are *worlds* so far away, although they
look so nigh.

Our boys can tell us wondrous things about the sea
an' land,
How God took ages to make both as now we see
them stand;
An' how He dug the valleys down an' reared the
mountains high
That look so much like pillars vast to help uphold
the sky.

They'll tell us how the rocks were made an' fixed
fast in their place,
An' how the coal we burn was formed, an' all its
stages trace.
They'll tell us how some kinds of rocks were made
from shells an' bones,
An' how the glaciers scattered 'round the massive
boulder stones.

They'll tell us how the air we breath don't reach
up very high,
Although we used to think it went 'way up into the
sky.

They'll tell us that the dew don't *fall*, but comes
some other way,
An' all these things they'll prove to us an' make
'em plain as day.

There's lots of schoolgirls now can tell how
plants an' grasses grow,
An' how the leaves an' buds are formed, an' how
the flowers blow;
They'll tell us how they gather up their food from
earth an' air,
An' lots of things so wonderful it makes me stand
an' stare.

The schoolbooks too, are different from what they
used to be;
Somehow they make things plainer, so that ev'ry
one can see.
The schoolroom walls are covered now with black-
boards an' with maps,
Instead of pegs we used to see for hangin hats an'
caps;
They've globes an' other fixin's now we never heard
of then,
For teachin' boys to grow up into educated men.

School-teachers too, are different now from them
of years ago;
They're better l'arned in ev'rything than them we
used to know;

They're proud of their profession, an' they've got their standard high,
An' bound to make it higher still. They'll do it if they try.

They teach their scholars how to speak an' how to act polite.
They didn't *use* to do it so, but then I think it's right.
It makes me kind o' feel ashamed of my old-fashioned ways,
An' wish I could a' been a boy in these enlightened days.

I tell you, Sary, I don't know what things will happen next;
This world is rushin' on so fast it makes me quite perplexed.
They've harnessed lightnin' with a wire, an' made it do their will,
An' hitched up steam to draw their loads through valley an' o'er hill.

We old folks won't be nowhere soon: they'll leave us all behind.
We can't keep step with younger ones in this fast march of mind;
But we can bid the age Godspeed in all it does that's *right*
Till Truth, with radiance like the sun, shall lighten Error's night.

HIRING THE TEACHER.

GOOD mornin', young feller! Yes, I'm the trustee.
If you're wantin' the school, I'm the man you must see.
I s'pose you've got l'arnin' enough to keep school,
An' gumption to make ev'ry child mind the rule?

"Our deestrict aint large, but the scholars are rough;
They've all got the grit,—they're a hard lot to bluff;—
They're awkward as oxen an' stubborn as mules,
An' won't be tied down by no high-soundin' rules.

"I'm afraid you're too light for our deestrict, my lad;
Ye look young an' green, an' I'd feel awful bad
To see 'em a pitchin' ye out of the door
Like they did the poor fellow that teached here before.

"What! Don't ye scare yet? Well, you're chuck full of grit;
But I'm 'fraid if you try it, you'll back down a bit.
I tell ye they're bad ones;—there can't be no wuss,
An' I woudn't advise ye to git in a muss.

"We don't want no teacher who's great on the mash,
If we ketch ye at *that*, sir, we'll settle yer hash!
We don't stand no flirtin' with girls in this place,—
Try *that*, an' the boys'll soon smash yer fine face!

"I s'pose ye don't swear nor drink liquor nor chew,
Nor spit on the carpet like some teachers do.
Our women's partic'lar 'bout such things, ye know,
An' they like folks around 'em that's jest about *so*.

"Board around? Why, of course you'll do *that*, to be sure,
An' ye won't skip any fam'lies because they are poor.
If they *will* send to school, they must help in some way
To pay off the teacher:—that's jest what *I* say.

"Well then, if ye think ye can manage the school
An' make the big boys step right up to each rule,
We'll give ye a trial an' wish ye good luck;
But you'll find out, young feller, you'll need lots of pluck."

THE SCHOOL-MEETIN'.

WE wanted to build a new schoolhouse; the old one was gittin' too small;
'Twouldn't answer the wants of the deestrict—that was jest the opinion of all,
'Cept a few of the fogies among us who thought the old buildin' would do,
Or at most, we could fix it a little; 'twould cost less than buildin' a new.

So we finally called a school-meetin', an' most of the deestrict was there;
The buildin' was pooty well crowded, not much room to speak of, to spare;—
I noticed some women amongst 'em; they'd come there to vote, so they said;
But somehow I thought they'd look better a puttin' the children to bed.

The chairman he rapped on the table an' told us we'd met there that night
To consider 'bout buildin' a schoolhouse, an' not for to quarrel an' fight;
He hoped we would all act like neighbors, each doin' the best that he could
To act out the wish of the deestrict, an' help on the general good.

Then up got old Jimmy McGowner an' looked
'round the room with a scowl
An' begun to find fault with his neighbors; but his
speech wa'n't much more than a growl.
He said the old schoolhouse was handy, though
mebbe a little too small
An' needed a leetle addition, – some ten foot or so,
that was all.

Then up jumped a dashin' young feller; he said we
had met to discuss
A matter of gineral interest and weighty importance
to us:—
He said that we wanted a schoolhouse we all could
contemplate with pride, —
A credit to our school-deestrict,—a mark of our
progress beside.

Then somebody made a proposal we vote on the
cost of the thing,
An' not spend the time makin' speeches; if we did
we could set there till spring,
An' *then* we'd not be any nearer to what we had
come there to do;
So 'twas best to git right into business if we
wanted to push the thing through.

So it was voted to put up a buildin' that shouldn't
exceed in its cost
Some seven or eight hundred dollars, or nine hun-
dred dollars at most;

It made quite a grumblin' an' mutterin', made some
of 'em catch for their breath;—
They said that a house *so* expensive would be taxin'
'em almost to death.

But finally they got that p'int settled; and then
some one riz to his feet
An' said there was yet one thing further for which
we'd been called on to meet.
The place where the buildin' was standin' he didn't
consider jest right,
So he moved that a vote should be taken to build
on a different site.

'Twas like stickin' a match into powder—this
wantin' to change the old site,
An' half of them swore 'twas an outrage! Before
they would stand it they'd fight!
An' then such a jawin' an' quarrelin'—one tellin'
another he lied,
An' the women a screamin' an' screechin'—each
takin' her own husband's side.

The chairman he rapped on the table an' yelled
just the best that he could
To git 'em to stop the confusion, but it didn't do
one bit of good.
They kept on a jawin' an' quarrelin' an' shakin'
their fists in the air,
An' one was a howlin' to t'other to meet him half
way if he dare.

'Twas shameful the way that they acted;—wild beasts couldn't do any wuss,
For they haint got the power that men have to swear at each other an' cuss;
But one thing I seen pooty closely,—I couldn't help noticin' it,
The ones that was talkin' fight loudest, kept back where they wouldn't get hit.

There wasn't no bloodshed among 'em, though one of 'em got a black eye,
But that was a lesson to others that made 'em a leetle bit shy,
An' after a while they got quiet enough for the chairman to speak,
An' he yelled jest as loud's he could holler: "*The meetin's adjourned for one week!*"

The next week they all came together to vote on the changin' of site;
But you'd thought from the way that they acted, they'd met jest to quarrel an' fight.
They seemed to forget they were neighbors an' ought to be generous an' kind,
But the question of changin' the schoolhouse drove ev'rything else from their mind.

They didn't do much at that meetin', but adjourned for another week more,
An' the next meetin' wasn't much better, but jest 'bout the same as before;—

The people who once were good neighbors an' pleasant whenever they'd meet,
Now quarreled an' snarled at each other whenever they'd meet in the street.

But at last the matter was settled,—the buildin' put on a new site;—
The deestrict all liked it much better, an' ev'ry one said 'twas jest right.
We're all of us proud of our schoolhouse; 'tis neither too large nor too small,
An' the neighbors are all of 'em friendly, an' that is the best of it all.

OLD JONES.

JONES dead, did ye say? Well, that's sudden!
He's only been sick 'bout a week,
An' nobody thought he was dang'rous:
But life's but a span, so to speak!
Did ye say he ketched cold while a workin'
That terrible day in the rain?
'Twas too bad for a dog to be out in!
Why, the man must have been 'most insane!

Well, he's gone, an' he's left lots of money:
He had to leave that all behind;
But it makes a nice pile for his widder
An' his poor, crippled boy that is blind.
His days of hard workin' are over,—
His days of hard toilin' to save;
He's gone to his home in the churchyard,
To his long, quiet rest in the grave.

'Most ev'ry one called him a miser,
An' said he was hard in his deal;
They said he was rough an' unchristian,
An' hadn't a heart that could feel.
We know he would swear like a pirate,
An' tear around when he got mad,
An' say that some preachers were rascals,
Who'd go, when they died, to the bad.

He hadn't no mercy for loafers
An' lazy folks loungin' about;
If ever they came hangin' 'round him,
He'd most mighty quick kick 'em out.
He didn't give much for the heathen,—
He said they were too far away;—
We'd lots of poor heathen amongst us,
We could help, if we wished, ev'ry day.

But he wasn't so bad as they called him,
Though sometimes he acted so rough;
For ye know that along in last winter
When times were so awfully tough
That 'twas hard for the poor an' the sickly
To git what they wanted to eat;
An' even some others amongst us
Had hard work to make both ends meet,

How he hunted up work for the poor folks,
An' sot 'em a sawin' up wood
Or threshin' or shovelin' out snowdrifts
Or anything else that he could,
An' paid every man, too, his wages
To the very last cent that he'd earned;—
In that way he done more for the needy
Than anyone else as I've learned.

When Widder McLane's only cow died
An' her children were cryin' for milk,
While some neighbors had more than they wanted,
An' were dressin' their bodies in silk,

Then old Jones said nothin' to no one,
  But picked out his best new-milk cow,
An' druv her right up to the widder's;—
  It surprised her somewhat, I'll allow.

When Smith broke his arm last October
  An' his fam'ly was sufferin' for food,
Old Jones took him lots of provisions,
  Besides sev'ral loads of hard wood.
Yet he never was blowin' his trumpet,
  Nor braggin' of what he had done;
But if any one needed a liftin',
  He was always on hand the first one.

So old Jones is dead! Well, I'm sorry.
  We'll miss him a good deal, I guess;
Though he sometimes was rough an' high-tempered,
  He was always good-hearted no less.
The poor folks will miss him next winter
  When their meat an' potatoes get low;—
When the wolf in their doors is a starin',
  What a good friend they've lost, then they'll know.

I don't care who calls him a sinner,
  They can talk just as much as they may;
But I b'lieve if there's ever a heaven,
  Old Jones he has gone there to stay.
If ev'ry one lived just as honest
  An' done just as much for the poor,
I don't think there'd be so much trouble
  In findin' the heavenly door.

FARMER JOHN'S ADVICE TO HIS SON.

WELL, Tom, you're twenty-one to-day; you
aint a boy no more;
You're master of yourself now, Tom; you've never
been before.
You're goin' out into the world, I hope you'll find
it kind,
But don't forget the old home, Tom, nor them
that's left behind.

Don't put on too much steam at first, an' try to
rush too fast,
But feel your way with cautious steps; you'll come
out best at last.
Don't crowd your way 'long through the world by
thrustin' men aside,
Nor yet be like the floatin' drift that's carried with
the tide.

Be sure you're right before you start, and then go
straight ahead;
In duty's path keep travelin' on with firm an'
manly tread;—
Don't mind the scoffs and sneers that come from
shallow-pated fools
Who'll try to turn you from the right; they're only
Satan's tools.

FARMER JOHN'S ADVICE TO HIS SON.

Don't tell to every man you meet what you intend
to do,
Nor make a friend of every one that *seems* a friend
to you;
But when you've proved one's friendship and found
it true as gold,
Then stick to him through thick an' thin;—he
can't be bought nor sold.

Steer clear of brawls an' quarrels, an' dodge them
if you can;
But if you get mixed up in one, then show your-
self a man.
Defend with all the power you have the side you
b'lieve is right,
An' others will respect you when they know that
you *can* fight.

When men advise, then lend an ear to what they
have to say,
But follow, when you come to act, where *judgment*
leads the way;
For if you try to to take the course that each one
marks for you,
You'll surely fail in everything you undertake to
do.

Men often judge a stranger by the clothes they see
him wear,
And I won't undertake to say but what that judg-
ment's fair.

FARMER JOHN'S ADVICE TO HIS SON.

Wear garments that will fit your form an' make
you look well-dressed,
An' do not think the *cheapest* ones must always be
the best.

Be fair and square toward every man with whom
you have to deal,
An' if he gets the start of you in business, never
squeal;
But don't get caught the second time by any
trickster's game,
For if you do there's no one but yourself will be to
blame.

Beware of vice in every form. Beware the tempter's
wiles.
The devil oftentimes employs fair woman's
sweetest smiles;
But if you keep your spirit pure, and an untar-
nished name,
You'll never need to hang your head to hide the
blush of shame.

Whene'er you meet a fallen one on whom the
people frown,
Don't put your foot upon his neck an' press him
lower down;
But take him by the hand and give him help and
kind good-will;—
Remember that he *once* was pure, an' that he's
human still.

FARMER JOHN'S ADVICE TO HIS SON.

An' take the Bible for your guide; you can't go far astray
As long as you keep steerin' where the Good Book points the way.
'Twill make you honest, true an' good an' steadfast in the right,
An' show you to your fellow-men, a bright an' shinin' light.

Make every day a record be of some good action done;
Thus shall your life, though long or short, be a successful one.
An' then when death shall fold your hands, your earthly labors o'er,
You'll hear God's holy angels shout, "Welcome to heaven's bright shore."

THE SCHOHARIE DUTCHMAN.

BROAD-SHOULDERED and sinewy, brawny of limb,
Filled with big-heartedness full to the brim,
Jolly good-nature from each feature glows,
Sunshine moves with him wherever he goes.
Smiles wreathe the lips of the wretched and poor
When his big, burly form is seen entering their door,
For he brings not upbraidings their hunger to greet,
But money to buy bread, potatoes and meat.

His home beams with sunshine,—his children and wife
He loves with a love that is lasting as life;
You may search, if you will, through the whole country 'round,
And no cleanlier women will ever be found.
Their pans shine like silver all burnished and bright,
Their linen is purest, immaculate white;
The choicest of viands their table affords,
Which would tempt e'en the palates of princes or lords.

No bickerings mar the complete amity,
For parents and children together agree.
The sons do *their* portion the burdens to bear,
And of household economy shirk not their share.
The daughters scorn not their old mother to aid,
Nor seek the more arduous toil to evade.
Each one is a model of virtue and grace,
And a smile of good-nature illumines her face.
Not too tall nor too short is her well-moulded form,
And the size 'round her waist just the length of my arm.

No bloomers she wears nor bifurcated skirts,
Nor collars and bosoms of masculine shirts.
With a heart filled with love for the man of her choice,
Whoever shall get her will always rejoice
That when searching around for a partner for life,
He was wise when he chose the Dutch girl for his wife.

When the cold snows of winter have melted away
And fields with early spring flowers are gay,
Then the jolly Dutch farmer goes forth with all speed,
To furrow the soil and put in the seed.
His broad-shouldered sons put their hands to the work,—
Not one of them wishes the labor to shirk.

His sleek, well-fed team, with a whinny and snort,
Draw the harrow and plow o'er the fields as in sport.

When summer time comes and the air is all gay
With the perfume of flowers and newly-mown hay,
Then the ringing of scythes in the meadows we hear,
And the laugh of the mowers comes borne to the ear.
When up from the west the dark cloud rises fast,
And the thunder's deep growl bids the laborers haste,
Then the mother and girls from the house speed away
To assist what they can in securing the hay.

When the autumn time wanes and the ample old barn
Is filled to the peak with the wheat, oats and corn,
And Thanksgiving Day comes as it comes once a year
With its turkeys and puddings and ample good cheer,
Then the jolly old Dutchman forgets not to pay
The respect and the honor he thinks due the day.
'Tis a joy on that day to sit down at his board
And partake of the luxuries wealth can afford.

When winter time comes and the threshing is done,
The corn is all husked and the flax is all spun,
The wood all drawn up and piled high near the door
To keep the fire burning till winter is o'er;—
No work to be done but to care for the stock
While the ground is all frozen as hard as a rock,
Then the jolly old Dutchman grows fat at his ease,
Till his body swells out so he can't cross his knees.

When the frost and the snow on the winter gales ride,
And the Storm Demon shrieks in his fury outside,
When the fire glows bright in the old fireplace,
Then a smile of contentment steals over his face.
When the evening comes on and the supper is o'er,
The jingling of sleigh-bells is heard at his door;
A load of his neighboring farmers has come
With their wives and their children to visit his home.

Then all draw around the wide-mouthed fireplace,
And the bright, dancing flame brings a glow to each face,
The apples and cider and nuts are brought 'round
And laughter and mirth and good feeling abound.
The men talk of horses and cattle and grain,

The women of babies and housework complain;
But never a sentence of scandal is heard,
Nor scorn of their neighbors, not even a word.

God bless the old Dutchman with unalloyed joys,
And blessings pour down on his girls and his boys;
And when this life earthly with us shall be o'er
And our feet lightly press the fair, evergreen shore,
When the rich, gold-paved streets and the brilliant
white throne
By shining-winged angels to us shall be shown,
Schoharie's old Dutchman among them will stand,
Clad in glittering robes, with a harp in his hand.

FARMER JOHN ON THE ALBANY CITY HOSPITAL.

WELL, Sary, I'm back from the Hospital;—
the doctors say I am 'most well;
An' while I am convalescing, I've lots of experience to tell.
The Hospital's a grand institution;—the doctors are skillful an' kind;—
The nurses are just what they should be:—no nobler young ladies you'll find.

I went there next thing to a dead man,—the darkest of prospects in view;
But God an' the doctors an' nurses joined together in pullin' me through,
An' now I am back with you, Sary, I'll soon be a sound, healthy man;
I want to give God an' the Hospital the highest of praises I can.

I ain't advertisin' the Hospital, for ev'ry one plainly can see
The wonderful cures there effected speak louder than language from me.
May God bless the grand institution that surely is Albany's pride,
An' God bless the doctors an' nurses an' every one else there beside.

There are those I will always remember with kindest of feelings for all;—
First Dr. McDonald, the surgeon, as large 'round the waist as he's tall,
And the big heart that beats in his bosom, if in weight as in size it shall run,
Will make the full weight of the doctor not less than a quarter of a ton.

Doctors Richardson, Cunningham, Griffin, whose names I shall never forget,
With others, all grand-hearted fellows an' skillful as any you've met;
And then too MacMullen and Gibroy are orderlies skillful an' kind;—
Search all the world over and never more capable artists you'll find.

Then there's Miss McDonnell, the matron, whom nature just fits for her place,
While dignity governs each movement, good-nature beams forth from her face;—
Looks after the needs of the patients, regarding the good of each one,
And keeps both her eyes on the nurses to see that their duties are done.

Then there are the nurses, God bless them, with hearts full of zeal in their work;
Not one lazy one in their number, not one who her duties will shirk.

FARMER JOHN ON THE ALBANY HOSPITAL.

I think it each doctor's plain duty, the very best
deed in his life,
To pick out some one of their number and make
that fair damsel his wife.

Miss Mason, with heart full of kindness, as softly
she steps in each room,
Brings sunshine and joy with her presence, dispel-
ling the darkness and gloom,—
Arranging the pillows and blankets with smiles and
with kind words of cheer;—
The pain and the suffering lessen whenever Miss
Mason is near.

Miss Welch and Miss Bielby are models of all that
is cheerful an' kind;
A patient, with their kind attendance, to illness is
almost resigned.
They know what to do, when to do it, and do just
what ought to be done,
Their kindness calls down on them blessings from
every suffering one.

There are others whose names I've forgotten; I
cannot remember each name;
But each should appear in bright letters inscribed
on the temple of fame.
Their kindness will sure be rewarded in this world
or heaven above,
When God calls His people together to share the
rewards of His love.

Then there are the people who visit their friends
who to them are so dear,
And bring gifts of sweet, blooming flowers and
loving and kind words of cheer.
God bless and reward those dear people; they know
not how much good they do,—
Those noble-souled hospital angels whose hearts
are so loving an' true.

HOW WE PAID FOR THE PARSONAGE.

WELL, yes; we've got it paid for an' the church is out of debt;
We don't owe any one a cent,—we're clean out of the wet.
It seemed, one time, we'd have to let the parsonage be sold,
'Most everybody seemed to act so careless an' so cold.

The parsonage is 'bout the nicest buildin' in our street;
Of course it ain't showy, but 'tis cozy, snug an' neat,
An' none of us need be ashamed when strangers come about
An' ask about our parsonage to proudly, p'int it out.

But we were owin' quite a sum upon the buildin' yet,
An' people didn't seem to feel like payin' up the debt;
Some said the buildin' cost too much,—the trustees wasn't smart,—
They ort to raised the money first before they made a start.

It run on so for quite a spell, no one a takin' hold;—
The debt kept growin' bigger, an' folks said it must be sold,
Although a few kept hangin' on an' hopin' for the best,
Determined they'd do what they could an' trust God for the rest.

But God, it seemed, was shapin' things about in His own way,
Although we kinder fretted an' found fault with the delay.
We couldn't look ahead an' see just what was for our good,
But frettin' cause they *wouldn't* pay when we were sure they *could*.

At length the parson an' trustees decided on a plan:—
The parson said, "With God's good help I'll do the best I can:
I know our people are not rich, — they hain't got much to spare,
But we will try what can be done by hitchin' work with prayer."

An' so we all with one accord, put shoulder to the wheel;—
The parson preached 'bout payin' debts an' worked up quite a zeal.

It opened up the people's eyes 'bout what they
owed the Lord,
An' made some of 'em willin' to give all they
could afford.

The men they worked, the women worked, 'most
ev'rybody worked,
An' all throughout the neighborhood there wa'n't
but few that shirked,
An' some we thought that used to be the stingiest
of all,
Just opened up their pocket-books an' showed they
wasn't small.

I s'pose some paid a good deal more than what
they could afford,
But then their conscience told them that they done
it for the Lord;
An' when some folks make up their minds God's
smile is on their deeds,
They'll shell out pooty liberal an' trust Him for
their needs.

As I was tellin' ye afore, the men-folks they took
hold;—
Some things they'd thought they couldn't spare
they done without or sold
An' took the cash an' turned it in to help pay up
the debt,
An' done it all without a single grumble or a
fret.

The women-folks they took hold too,—they said
they'd do their share,
An' when a woman says she *will*, you bet she'll
just get there.
They took hold with a spirit on a regular woman's
plan
That never could been made to work if got up by
a man.

They called a meetin' by themselves, an' ev'ry one
agreed
She'd earn a dollar by herself, by some good, use-
ful deed;
An' so they went to work on that, an' meetin'
ev'ry week
To talk the matter over an' compare notes, so to
speak.

Some went to workin' tidies an' sold them at the
store,
An' some saved rags an' sold 'em at two cents a
pound or more,
An' some amongst the farmers' wives, sold eggs
an' saved the price,
An' some went out a cleanin' house an' done their
work up nice.

They didn't mind the labor, for they had a lot of
fun,
An' ev'rybody was surprised to see what they had
done.

Then they ended with a supper in the good, old-fashioned style,
An' brought a hundred dollars in to help make up the pile.

The men who hadn't much ahead an' worked out by the day,
Although they couldn't pay so much, a *little* they would pay;
An' so they worked so many days, just what they could afford,
An' gave the money that they earned an offerin' to the Lord.

The children in the Sunday-school, they felt the spirit too,
An' they determined that they'd show what *little* folks could do;
Each dropped their nickels in a box from out their little store,
An' in that way the children raised just fifty dollars more.

I tell ye every one rejoiced when we had paid the debt,
An' cheeks that showed deep lines of care, with tears of joy were wet.
Did *I* rejoice? You bet I did! I throwed my cap up high
An' shouted *Hallelujah!* till I almost split the sky.

HOW WE PAID FOR THE PARSONAGE.

We feel a good deal better now—enjoy religion more,
Since we have paid that awful debt than what we did before.
The parson smiles an' says that God will bless us every one,
An' mete out lots of good to us to pay for what we've done.

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